

J. S. KNOWLES









*R. Cruikshank, Del.*

*White, Sc.*

### **Virginius.**

*Virginius.* I've seen this face! Tut! tut! I know it  
As well as I do my own, yet can't bethink me  
Whose face it is!

*Virginia.* You mean Achilles' face!

*Act I. Scene 2.*

# VIRGINIUS:

A TRAGEDY,

In Five Acts,

BY JAMES SHERIDAN KNOWLES, ESQ.,

*Author of Virginius, Cains Gracchus, The Love-Chase, The Hunchback,  
Love, &c.*

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PRINTED FROM THE ACTING COPY, WITH REMARKS,  
BIOGRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL, BY D.—G.

To which are added

A DESCRIPTION OF THE COSTUME,—CAST OF THE CHARACTERS —  
ENTRANCES AND EXITS,—RELATIVE POSITIONS OF THE  
PERFORMERS ON THE STAGE,—AND THE WHOLE  
OF THE STAGE BUSINESS,

As performed at the

THEATRES ROYAL, LONDON.

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EMBELLISHED WITH A FINE ENGRAVING,  
By Mr. BONNER, from a Drawing taken in the Theatre, by  
Mr. R. CRUIKSHANK.

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## DEDICATION.

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TO WILLIAM MACREADY, Esq.

MY DEAR SIR,

What can I do less than dedicate this Tragedy to you ? This is a question which you cannot answer ; but I can—I cannot do less ; and if I could do more, I ought, and would.

I was a perfect stranger to you. You read my play, and at once committed yourself respecting its merits. This, perhaps, is not saying much for your head—but it says a great deal for your heart ; and that is the consideration which, above all others, makes me feel happy, and proud, in subscribing myself,

Your grateful Friend and Servant,

JAMES SHERIDAN KNOWLES.

*London, May 20, 1820.*

## REMARKS.

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### Virginius.

THERE is not in history, ancient or modern, a story of deeper woe—one that exhibits a more exalted picture of true greatness, than the sacrifice of Virginia by her father, to save her from the lust of the Decemvir Appius. The tale is simple and grand, and full of dramatic interest, which should centre in one catastrophe, the death of Virginia. All beyond that is extraneous. It is harder for the poet to pourtray than the imagination to conceive the agony of a fond father after having been reduced to so sad an extremity. Nor is it necessary to show by what means the tyrant fell, whether by his own ignoble hand, or by the fury of the tribunes. When he falls by that of Virginius, he falls too nobly. And, though the introduction of the urn containing the ashes of Virginia, may produce an involuntary shudder—though it cause the heart to throb and the eyes to o’erflow—the plot had been more integral and complete, had it concluded with the terrible denunciation of Virginius, when he draws forth the weapon reeking with his daughter’s blood ;—

“ Lo ! Appius ! with this innocent blood,  
I do devote thee to the infernal gods ! ”

An author, however, who writes for the stage, must often violate his own judgment to fall in with the public taste. Addison complained of this dire necessity, when he introduced the loves of Juba and Marcia in Cato. The audience had been so long accustomed to love scenes, that a tragedy without an amour would have stood no chance of success. We are therefore ready to admit, that though such a conclusion would have been more in accordance with true taste, it is a question if the play had been equally popular had the distraction of Virginius, the death of Appius, and the exhibition of the urn, been omitted. It is singular, conversant as Shakspeare was with ancient history, that two such interesting stories of Imperial Rome, the death of Virginia, and the judgment of Brutus, should have escaped his vigilance. Yet, great as was the sacrifice that Brutus made by



devoting his offending son to the violated laws of Rome, far greater was that of Virginius, who sacrificed an only child, that had never offended, and with his own arm struck the blow. We bow with reverence to such an example of god-like virtue. To him the life of Virginia is "dear as the ruddy drops that warm his heart," but her honour is infinitely dearer—to him is presented the alternative of sacrificing the one or the other—his decision is noble—sacred therefore be his sorrows. Nothing short of inspiration can pourtray the wanderings and agony of a disordered mind and a broken heart. That inspiration belongs to Shakspeare; and, taking *Lear* as the highest standard—to *him alone*—in all its supremacy and grandeur.

Looking to the tragic writers of the present day, Mr. Knowles is, perhaps, the only one among them that is worthy to treat so noble a subject as the death of Virginia. If he has not the sublime enthusiasm of true poetry, he has no prose run mad—his style is level, in which there is much to praise and little to condemn.

Virginius has all the bravery of the warrior, the ardent love of liberty, of a free-born citizen, and the tenderness of a father: and so happily are these qualities blended in him, that he ranks as one of the most illustrious characters that Rome has handed down for the admiration of mankind. Mr. Knowles has represented Virginius with great truth, nor has he been less successful in his portrait of Virginia; her gentleness and constancy are well preserved. In Dentatus, he has measured swords with Shakspeare, whose genius bears "a charmed life," yet is Mr. Knowles less a rival than an imitator. All the peculiarities of the veteran Dentatus, his sarcastic wit, his contempt of popular clamour, his independent spirit, and bravery, belong to the Patrician Menenius; nor could the author of Virginius paint him otherwise—he has copied his original with great success, which is no mean achievement, when that original is *Shakspeare*.

Much praise is due to the mechanical part of this play—the arrangement of the scenes, and the disposition of the characters. Dramatic effect has been kept in view, of which the scene where Numitorius and Servia reproach Appius, and that where Virginius stabs his daughter, are very favourable instances. Mr. Knowles has occasionally imitated the bald simplicity and familiar style of the ancient dramatists. He has also borrowed just sufficient from that heavy play entitled "*Virginia*," written by Henry Crisp, and acted in Drury Lane in 1754, to warrant our making an allusion to it, and no more.

It is pleasing to speak in laudatory terms of an actor like Mr. Maeready. It is at all times more gratifying to greet success than to record a failure; and if, in noticing his *Shakspearian* efforts, we have had occasion to remark how infinitely they fell beneath the conception of the poet—we hail the present opportunity of vindicating

him his just meed of applause; for it would be impossible to name this tragedy, and forget the actor to whom, in a great measure, it owes its popularity. Mr. Macready's performance is nervous and bold—he has much of the dignity and all the paternal tenderness of this illustrious Roman. His early interviews with Virginia were tender and playful—he warmed with every scene, and the dreadful agony of his spirit, and the convulsive tremors of his frame, while he is meditating his last great sacrifice, were finely depicted. We admired him least in the subsequent scenes—he tried to produce effect (and a very disagreeable one it *did* produce), by straining his voice from the lowest note to the top of the compass, and we now and then had occasion to exclaim—

“Avant, unnatural start, affected pause!”

Any actor that imitates *Kean* is sure to fail. *Kean's* beauties are peculiar, and cannot be transmitted—his faults are no less so, and become intolerable in any actor but himself. We remember the story of a literary witling that wore a glass, because *Pope* was near-sighted. An actor, when he *affects* a hoarse voice and extravagant gestures, does not *imitate* but burlesque *Kean*.

Miss Foote *looked* Virginia to the life—she also played with delicacy and feeling. Mr. Terry in *Dentatus*, had no more discretion than a malt-horse—he missed all the sarcasm that Munden throws into *Menenius*—*Dentatus* is a veteran soldier, rough in manner, and rude in speech. Mr. Terry made him a low snarler, a bluff savage, something between *Diogenes* and *Charles the Twelfth*.

 D—G.

# Costume.

- APPIUS.—Toga and purple stripe, flesh legs, and red sandals.  
 SPURIUS. } General's armour, toga, and stripe flesh legs, and  
 VIBULANUS. } sandals.  
 HONORIUS. } Toga, with red bands; and sandals.  
 VALERIUS. }  
 CAIUS. } Plain togas, and sandals.  
 MARCUS. }  
 DENTATUS. } Plain togas and armour, and black sandals.  
 VIRGINIUS. }  
 NUMITORIUS. }  
 ICILIUS. } Plain togas and mourning, and russet sandals.  
 LUCIUS. }  
 PUBLIUS. } Lamberkeens, armour, and white kilt, flesh legs,  
 DECIUS. } and sandals.  
 SEXTUS. }  
 TITUS. } Citizens, as in Coriolanus, brown stuff dresses, flesh  
 SERVIUS. } legs, and russet sandals.  
 CNEIUS.—Plain toga.  
 VIRGINIA.—Plain white; white robe, trimmed with white fringe;  
 plain white ribbon tied round her head, and hanging down behind.  
 SERVIA.—White dress; red robe, trimmed with yellow; plain  
 white ribbon tied round her head, and long ends hanging down  
 behind.

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## STAGE DIRECTIONS.

The Conductors of this Work print no Plays but those which they have seen acted. The *Stage Directions* are given from their own personal observations, during the most recent performances.

The instant a *Character* appears upon the Stage, the point of *Entrance*, as well as every subsequent change of *Position*, till its *Exit*, is noted, with a fidelity which may in all cases be relied on; the object being, to establish this Work as a *Standard Guide to the Stage business*, as now conducted on the London boards.

### EXITS and ENTRANCES.

R. means *Right*; L. *Left*; R. D. *Right Door*; L. D. *Left Door*,  
 S. E. *Second Entrance*; U. E. *Upper Entrance*; M. D. *Middle Door*

### RELATIVE POSITIONS.

R. means *Right*; L. *Left*; C. *Centre*; R. C. *Right of Centre*  
 L. C. *Left of Centre*.

\*\* The Reader is supposed to be on the Stage facing the Audience.

R.

RC

C.

LC.

L.

*Cast of the Characters in the Tragedy of Virginius, at the Theatres-Royal, Covent Garden and Drury Lane, 1826.*

|                              |   |                             |   |                        |   |                |
|------------------------------|---|-----------------------------|---|------------------------|---|----------------|
| <i>Appius Claudius</i> ..... | { | Decemvirs .....             | { | Covent Garden.         | { | Drury Lane.    |
| <i>Spurius Oppius</i> .....  |   |                             |   |                        |   |                |
| <i>Vibulanus</i> .....       | { | Patricians .....            | { | Mr. Abbott.            | { | Mr. Archer.    |
| <i>Honorius</i> .....        |   |                             |   |                        |   |                |
| <i>Valerius</i> .....        | { | Clients to Appius .....     | { | Mr. White.             | { | Mr. Howell.    |
| <i>Caius Claudius</i> .....  |   |                             |   |                        |   |                |
| <i>Marcus</i> .....          | { | A Veteran .....             | { | Mr. Jefferies.         | { | Mr. Harrold.   |
| <i>Dentatus</i> .....        |   |                             |   |                        |   |                |
| <i>Virginius</i> .....       | { | A Centurion .....           | { | Mr. Norris.            | { | Mr. Sutton.    |
| <i>Numitervius</i> .....     |   |                             |   |                        |   |                |
| <i> Icilius</i> .....        | { | His brother-in-law .....    | { | Mr. Vedy.              | { | Mr. Honnor.    |
| <i>Lucius</i> .....          |   |                             |   |                        |   |                |
| <i>Publius</i> .....         | { | In love with Virginia ..... | { | Mr. Connor.            | { | Mr. Penley.    |
| <i>Dectus</i> .....          |   |                             |   |                        |   |                |
| <i>Sextus</i> .....          | { | Brother of Icilius .....    | { | Mr. Claremont.         | { | Mr. Thompson.  |
| <i>Titus</i> .....           |   |                             |   |                        |   |                |
| <i>Servius</i> .....         | { | A Centurion .....           | { | Mr. Terry.             | { | Mr. Macready.  |
| <i>Cneius</i> .....          |   |                             |   |                        |   |                |
| <i>Virginius</i> .....       | { | His brother-in-law .....    | { | Mr. Egerton.           | { | Mr. Pope.      |
| <i>Servia</i> .....          |   |                             |   |                        |   |                |
| <i>Female Slave</i> .....    | { | In love with Virginia ..... | { | Mr. C. Kemble.         | { | Mr. Wallack.   |
|                              |   |                             |   |                        |   |                |
|                              | { | Brother of Icilius .....    | { | Mr. Comer.             | { | Mr. Young.     |
|                              |   |                             |   |                        |   |                |
|                              | { | Soldiers .....              | { | Mr. Mears.             | { | Mr. Gibbon.    |
|                              |   |                             |   |                        |   |                |
|                              | { | Citizens .....              | { | Mr. Treby.             | { | Mr. Yarnold.   |
|                              |   |                             |   |                        |   |                |
|                              | { | Citizens .....              | { | Mr. Crumpton.          | { | Mr. Webster.   |
|                              |   |                             |   |                        |   |                |
|                              | { | Citizens .....              | { | Mr. Faucit.            | { | Mr. Mercer.    |
|                              |   |                             |   |                        |   |                |
|                              | { | Citizens .....              | { | Mr. Atkins.            | { | Mr. Randall.   |
|                              |   |                             |   |                        |   |                |
|                              | { | Citizens .....              | { | Mr. King.              | { | Mrs. W. West.  |
|                              |   |                             |   |                        |   |                |
|                              | { | Citizens .....              | { | Miss Foote.            | { | Mrs. Glover.   |
|                              |   |                             |   |                        |   |                |
|                              | { | Citizens .....              | { | Mrs. Faucit.           | { | Mrs. Willmott. |
|                              |   |                             |   |                        |   |                |
|                              | { | Citizens .....              | { | Mrs. Chipp.            | { |                |
|                              |   |                             |   |                        |   |                |
|                              | { | Citizens .....              | { | Soldiers, Lictors, &c. | { |                |
|                              |   |                             |   |                        |   |                |

SCENE, *Chiefly Rome.*

The passages marked with inverted commas are omitted in the representation.

# VIRGINIUS.

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## ACT I.

### SCENE I.—*A Street in Rome.*

*Enter SERVIVS and CNEIVS, and Citizens, L.—Citizens stand on L.*

*Ser.* CARBO denied a hearing!

*Cne. (c.)* Ay, and Marcellus cast into prison, because he sued a friend of one of the Decemvirs for a sum of money he had lent him.

*Ser. (R. c.)* And Appius resisted not? Appius! that in the first Decemvirate was a god to the people.

*Cne.* Resisted not! Nay, was most loud in favour of the decree; but hither comes Virginius, who interested himself so much in Carbo's affair. He looks a little heated. Is not that Titus he is speaking to? Stand aside, Master, and listen. *[Retire back on L.*

*Enter VIRGINIVS and TITVS, R.*

*Vir. (c.)* Why did you make him Decemvir, and first Decemvir too?

*Tit. (R.)* We had tried him, and found him honest.

*Vir. (L. c.)* And could you not have remained content? Why try him again, to find him dishonest? Knew ye not he was a Patrician, and of the Claudian family?

*Tit.* He laid down the Consulate——

*Vir.* Ha! ha! ha! to be elected into the Decemvirate, and he was so; and he laid down his office of Decemvir, to be re-elected into the Decemvirate, and he is so: Ay, by Jupiter! and to the exclusion of his late colleagues! Did not Titus Genutius lay down the Consulate?

*Tit.* He did.

*Vir. (c.)* Was he not next to Appius in the Decemvirate?

*Tit.* He was.

*Vir.* Did you not find him honest?

*Tit.* We did find him honest.

*Vir.* As honest as Appius Claudius?



*Tit.* Quite as honest.

*Vir.* Quite as honest! And why not re-elect him Decemvir? Most sapient people! You re-elect Appius into the Decemvirate for his honesty, and you thrust Titus out of the Decemvirate—I suppose for his honesty also? Why, Appius was sick of the Decemvirate! [*Goes, L.*]

*Ser. (c.)* I never heard him say so.

*Vir. (L.)* But he did say so—say so in my hearing; in presence of the senators, Valerius and Caius Claudius, and I don't know how many others. 'Twas known to the whole body of the Senate—not that he was sick, but that he said so. Yes! yes! he and his colleagues, he said, had done the work of the Republic for a whole year, and it was now but just to grant them a little repose, and appoint others to succeed them.

*Tit.* Well, well, we can only say he changed his mind.

*Vir.* No, no, we need'nt say that neither; as he had laboured in the Decemvirate, perhaps he thought he might as well repose in the Decemvirate.

*Tit.* I know not what he thought. He is Decemvir, and we made him so, and cannot help ourselves. Fare you well, Virginius. Come, let's to the Forum.

[*Exeunt Titus, Servius, and Cneius, R.*]

*Vir* [*Still on L. looking after them and pointing.*]

You cannot help yourselves! Indeed, you cannot;  
You help'd to put your masters on your backs.  
They like their seat, and make you show your paces;  
They ride you—sweat you—curb you—lash you—and  
You cannot throw them off with all your mettle!  
But here comes one, whose share in giving you  
To such unsparing riders, touches me  
More nearly, for that I've an interest  
In proving him a man of fair and most  
Erect integrity. (*c.*) Good day, Icilius.

*Enter ICILIUS, R. S. E.*

*Icil. (R. c.)* Worthy Virginius! 'tis an evil day  
For Rome, that gives her more convincing proof,  
The thing she took for hope, is but a base  
And wretched counterfeit! Our new Decemvirs  
Are any thing but friends to justice and  
Their country.

*Vir.* You, Icilius, had a hand  
In their election. You applied to me

To aid you with my vote, in the Comitia;  
I told you then, and tell you now again,  
I am not pleas'd when a Patrician bends  
His head to a Plebeian's girdle! Mark me!  
I'd rather he should stand aloof, and wear  
His shoulder high—especially the nephew  
Of Caius Claudius.

*Icil.* I would have pledg'd my life—

*Vir.* 'Twas a high gage, and men have stak'd a higher  
On grounds as poor as yours—their honour, boy!  
*Icilius*, I have heard it all—your plans—  
The understanding 'twixt the heads of the people—  
Of whom, *Icilius*, you are reckon'd one, and  
Worthily—and *Appius Claudius*—all—  
'Twas every jot disclos'd to me.

*Icil.* By whom?

*Vir.* *Siccius Dentatus*.

*Icil.* He disclos'd it to you?

*Siccius Dentatus* is a crabbed man.

*Vir.* *Siccius Dentatus* is an honest man!  
There's not a worthier in Rome! How now?  
Has he deceiv'd me? Do you call him liar?  
My friend! my comrade! honest *Siccius*,  
That has fought in six score battles?

*Icil.* Good *Virginus*,  
*Siccius Dentatus* is my friend—the friend  
Of every honest man in Rome—a brave man—  
A most brave man. Except yourself, *Virginus*,  
I do not know a man I prize above  
*Siccius Dentatus*—yet he's a crabbed man.

*Vir.* Yes, yes; he is a crabbed man.

*Icil.* A man

Who loves too much to wear a jealous eye.

*Vir.* No, not a whit!—where there is double dealing,  
You are the best judge of your own concerns;  
Yet, if it please you to communicate  
With me upon this subject, come and see me.  
I told you, boy, I favour'd not this stealing  
And winding into place. What he deserves,  
An honest man dares challenge 'gainst the world—  
But come and see me. [*Going, r.*] *Appius Claudius* chosen  
Decemvir, and his former colleagues, that  
Were quite as honest as himself, not chosen—  
No, not so much as nam'd by him—who nam'd  
Himself, and his new associates! (*r.*) Well, 'tis true

Dog fights with dog, but honesty is not  
 A cur doth bait his fellow—and e'en dogs,  
 By habit of companionship, abide  
 In terms of faith and cordiality—  
 But come and see me.

[A shout, L.]

*Icil.* (c.) Appius comes!

The people still throng after him with shouts,  
 Unwilling to believe their Jupiter  
 Has mark'd them for his thunder. Will you stay,  
 And see the homage that they render him?

*Vir.* Not I! Stay you; and, as you made him, hail him;

And shout, and wave your hand, and cry, long live  
 Our first and last Decemvir, Appius Claudius!  
 For he is first and last, and every one!  
 Rome owes you much, Icilius—Fare you well—  
 I shall be glad to see you at my house.

[*Exeunt Virginius, R. Icilius, L.*]

*Enter* APPIUS CLAUDIUS, CLAUDIUS, SICCIUS DENTATUS,  
 LUCIUS, TITUS, SERVIUS, MARCUS, and Citizens  
*shouting, R. S. E.*

*Tit.* Long live our first Decemvir!  
 Long live Appius Claudius!  
 Most noble Appius! Appius and the Decemvirate for ever!

[*Citizens shout.*]

*App.* (c.) My countrymen, and fellow citizens,  
 We will deserve your favour.

*Tit.* (L.) You have deserv'd it,  
 And will deserve it.

*App.* For that end we named  
 Ourselves Decemvir.

*Tit.* You could not have nam'd a better man.

*Den.* (R.) For his own purpose.

*App.* Be assur'd, we hold

[*Aside.*]

Our power but for your good. Your gift it was;  
 And gifts make surest debtors. Fare you well—  
 And, for your salutations, pardon me  
 If I repay you only with an echo—  
 Long live the worthy citizens of Rome!

[*Exit Appius, &c. the people shouting, L.*]

*Den.* [*Going, c.*] That was a pretty echo! (c.)—a most  
 soft echo. I never thought your voices were half so sweet!  
 a most melodious echo! I'd have you ever after make your



music before the Patricians' Palaces ; they give most exquisite responses !—especially that of Appius Claudius ! a most delicate echo !

*Tit.* What means Deutatus ?

*Ser.* He's ever carping—nothing pleases him.

*Den.* (R.) O ! yes—you please me—please me mightily, I assure you.—You are noble legislators, take most especial care of your own interest, bestow your votes most wisely too—on him who has the wit to get you into the humour ; and withal, have most musical voices—most musical—if one may judge by their echo.

*Tit.* (R.) Why, what quarrel have you with our choice ? Could we have chosen better ?—I say, there are ten honest Decenvirs we have chosen.

*Den.* I pray you, name them me.

*Tit.* There's Appius Claudius, first Decenvir.

*Den.* Ay, call him the head ; you are right. Appius Claudius, the head. Go on !

*Tit.* And Quintus Fabius Vibulanus.

*Den.* The body, that eats and drinks while the head thinks. Call him Appius's stomach. Fill him, and keep him from cold and indigestion, and he'll never give Appius the head-ache ! Well ?—There's excellent comfort in having a good stomach !—Well ?

*Tit.* There's Cornelius, Marcus Servilius, Minucius, and Titus Antonius.

*Den.* (C.) Arms, legs, and thighs !

*Tit.* And Marcus Rabuleius.

*Den.* (R.C.) He'll do for a hand, and, as he's a Senator, we'll call him the right-hand. We could'nt do less, you know, for a Senator !—Well ?

*Luc.* At least, you'll say we did well in electing Quintus Petilius, Caius Duellius, and Spurius Oppius, men of our order ! sound men ! “ known sticklers for the people ”—at least you'll say we did well in that !

*Den.* And who dares say otherwise ? “ Well ? ” one might as well say “ ill ” as “ well.” Well is the very skirt of commendation : next neighbour to that mire and gutter, “ ill.” “ Well,” indeed ! you acted like yourselves ! Nay, e'en yourselves could not have acted better ! Why, had you not elected them—Appius would have gone without his left hand, and each of his two feet.

*Ser.* (C.) Out ! you are dishonest !

*Den.* Ha !

*Ser.* What would content you ?

*Den.* A post in a hot battle! Out, you cur! Do you talk to me?

*Citizen.* [From behind.] Down with him, he does nothing but insult the people.

[The crowd approach *Dentatus* threateningly]

*Enter ICILIUS, suddenly, L. S. E.*

*Icil.* Stand back! Who is't that says down with *Siccus Dentatus*? Down with him! 'Tis what the enemy could never do; and shall we do it for them? Who uttered that dishonest word? Who uttered it, I say? Let him answer a fitter, though less worthy, mate, *Lucius Icilius*!

*Citizens.* Stand back, and hear *Icilius*!

*Icil. (c.)* What! hav'nt I voted for the Decenvirs, and do I snarl at his jests? Has he not a right to jest? the good, honest *Siccus Dentatus*, that, alone, at the head of the veterans, vanquished the *Æqui* for you. Has he not a right to jest? For shame! get to your houses! The worthy *Dentatus*! Cheer for him, if you are Romans! Cheer for him before you go! Cheer for him, I say!

[*Exeunt Citizens shouting, R. S. E.*]

*Den. (c.)* And now, what thanks do you expect from me, *Icilius*?

*Icil. (R.C.)* None.

*Den.* By Jupiter, young man, had you thus stepped before me in the heat of battle, I would have cloven you down—but I'm obliged to you, *Icilius*—and hark you! There's a piece of furniture in the house of a friend of mine, that's called *Virginius*, I think you've set your heart upon—dainty enough—yet not amiss for a young man to covet. Ne'er lose your hopes! He may be brought into the mind to part with it.—As to these curs, I question which I value more, their fawnings or their snarlings.—I thank you, boy! Do you walk this way?—I am glad of it! Come—"Tis a noble Decenvirate you have chosen for us! Come!

[*Exeunt, R.*]

## SCENE II.—*Virginius's House.*

*Enter VIRGINIUS and SERVIA, with some of Virginia's work in her hand.*

*Vir. (c.)* And is this all you have observed? I think There's nothing strange in that. An L and an I Twin'd with a V. Three very innocent letters To have bred such mischief in thy brain, good *Servia*!

Come, read this riddle to me.

*Ser.* (R. C.) You may laugh,  
 Virginius, but I'll read the riddle right.  
 The L doth stand for Lucius; and the I,  
 Icilius; which, I take it, will compose  
 Lucius Icilius.

*Vir.* So it will, good Servia.

*Servia.* Then, for the V; why, that is plain Virginia.

*Vir.* And now, what conjuration find you here?

*Ser.* What should I find, but love? The maid's in love,  
 And it is with Icilius. Look, the wreath  
 Is made of roses, that entwines the letters.

*Vir.* And this is all?

*Ser.* And is it not enough?

You'll find this figuring where'er you look:  
 There's not a piece of dainty work she does—  
 Embroidery, or painting—not a task  
 She finishes, but on the skirt, or border,  
 In needle-work, or pencil, this, her secret,  
 The silly wench betrays.

*Vir.* Go, send her to me—

Stay! Have you spoken to her of it?

*Ser.* (R.) I! Not I, indeed; I left that task to you—  
 Tho' once I asked her what the letters meant.  
 She laugh'd, and drew a scratch across them; but  
 Had scarce done so, 'ere her fair visage fell,  
 For grief that she had spoiled the cyphers—"and  
 A sigh came out, and then almost a tear;  
 And she did look as piteous on the harm  
 That she had done, as she had done it to  
 A thing, had sense to feel it." Never after  
 She let me note her at her work again.  
 She had good reason!

*Vir.* (L.) Send her to me, Servia. [*Exit Servia, R.*  
 There's something here, that looks as it would bring me  
 Anticipation of my wish. I think  
 Icilius loves my daughter (C.)—nay, I know it;  
 And such a man I'd challenge for her husband;—  
 And only waited, till her forward spring  
 Put on, a little more, the genial likeness  
 Of colouring into summer, (R. C.) ere I sought  
 To nurse a flower, which, blossoming too early,  
 Too early often dies; "but if it springs  
 Spontaneous, and, unlooked for, woos our hand  
 To tend and cherish it, the growth is healthful:

And 'twere untimely, as unkind, to check it."  
I'll ascertain it shortly—soft, she comes.

[Sits, c.

*Enter VIRGINIA, M. D.*

*Virginia.* [Standing on his L.] Well, father, what's your will?

*Vir.* I wish'd to see you,  
To ask you of your tasks—how they go on—  
And what your masters say of you—what last  
You did. I hope you never play  
The truant?

*Virginia.* The truant! No, indeed, Virginius.

*Vir.* I am sure you do not—kiss me!

*Virginia.* O! my father,  
I am so happy, when you're kind to me!

*Vir.* You are so happy when I'm kind to you!  
Am I not always kind? I never spoke  
An angry word to you in all my life,  
*Virginia!* You are happy when I'm kind!  
That's strange; and makes me think you have some reason  
To fear I may be otherwise than kind—  
Is't so, my girl?

*Virginia.* Indeed, I did not know  
What I was saying to you!

*Vir.* Why, that's worse  
And worse! What! when you said your father's ki  
Made you so happy, am I to believe  
You were not thinking of him?

*Virginia.* I——— [Greatly co.

*Vir.* Go, fetch me  
The latest task you did. [Exit *Virginia*,  
It is enough.

Her artless speech, like crystal, shows the thing  
'Twould hide, but only covers. 'Tis enough!  
She loves, and fears her father may condemn.

*VIRGINIA, re-entering with a painting.*

Here, sir.

*Vir.* What's this?

*Virginia.* 'Tis Homer's history  
Of great Achilles parting from Briseis.

*Vir.* You have done it well. The colouring is good,  
The figure's well design'd. 'Tis very well!—  
Whose face is this you've given to Achilles?

*Virginia.* Whose face?

*Vir.* I've seen this face! Tut! Tut! I know it



As well as I do my own, yet can't bethink me  
Whose face it is !

*Virginia.* You mean Achilles' face ?

*Vir.* Did I not say so ? 'Tis the very face  
Of—No ! No ! Not of him. There's too much youth  
And comeliness ; and too much fire, to suit  
The face of Siccus Dentatus.

*Virginia.* O !

You surely never took it for his face !

*Vir.* Why, no ; for now I look again, I'd swear  
You lost the copy ere you drew the head,  
And, to requite Achilles for the want  
Of his own face, contriv'd to borrow one  
From Lucius Icilius. My Dentatus,

*Enter DENTATUS, L.*

I am glad to see you ! [*Rises. Virginia retires, R.*]

*Den.* (L. C.) 'Tis not for my news, then.

*Vir.* Your news ! What news ?

*Den.* More violence and wrong from these new masters of ours, our noble Decemvirs—these demi-gods of the good people of Rome ! No man's property is safe from them. Nay, it appears we hold our wives and daughters but by the tenure of their will. Their liking is the law. The Senators themselves, scared at their audacious rule, withdraw themselves to their villas and leave us to our fate. There are rumours, also, of new incursions by the Sabines.

*Vir.* Rome never saw such days.

*Den.* And she'll see worse, unless I fail in my reckoning. Is that Virginia ? [*Goes R. to her.*] I saw her not before. How does the fair Virginia ? Why, she is quite a woman. I was just now wishing for a daughter.

*Vir.* A plague, you mean.

*Den.* (R.) I am sure you should not say so.

*Virginia.* (R.) Indeed he should not ; and he does not say so,

Dentatus—not that I am not a plague,  
But that he does not think me one, for all  
I do to weary him. I am sure, Dentatus,  
If to be thought to do well is to do well,  
There's nothing I do ill : But it is far  
From that ! for few things do I as I ought--  
Yet every thing is well done with my father,  
Dentatus.

*Vir.* [*Goes to them.*] That's well done, is it not, my friend? [*Aside.*]

But if you had a daughter, what would you do with her?

*Den.* I'd give her to Icilius. I should have been just now torn to pieces, but for his good offices. The gentle citizens, that are driven about by the Decemvirs' Lictors, like a herd of tame oxen, and, with most beast-like docility, only low applauses to them in return, would have done me the kindness to knock my brains out; but the noble Icilius bearded them singly, and railed them into temper. Had I a daughter worthy of such a husband, he should have such a wife, and a patrician's dower along with her.

*Vir.* I wish to speak with you, Dentatus. [*They retire. to M. D.*] Icilius is a young man whom I honor, but so far only as his conduct gives me warrant. He has had, as thou knowest, a principal hand in helping us to our Decemvirs. It may be that he is what I would gladly think him: but I must see him clearly, clearly, Dentatus. "If he has acted with the remotest understanding, touching the views of these new tyrants that we are cursed withal, I disclaim him as my friend! I cast him off for ever!"

[*Exeunt Virginius and Dentatus, M. D.*]

*Virginia.* (R.) How is it with my heart? I feel as one

That has lost every thing, and just before  
Had nothing left to wish for! He will cast  
Icilius off!—I never told it yet;  
But take of me, thou gentle air, the secret—  
And ever after breathe more balmy sweet  
I love Icilius! "Yes, although to thee  
I fear to tell it, that hast neither eye  
To scan my looks, nor voice to echo me,  
Nor e'en an o'er-apt ear to catch my words;  
Yet, sweet invisible confidant, my secret  
Once being thine—I tell thee, and I tell thee  
Again—and yet again," I love Icilius!  
He'll cast Icilius off!—not if Icilius  
Approve his honour. That he'll ever do;  
He speaks, and looks, and moves, a thing of honour,  
Or honour never yet spoke, look'd, or mov'd,  
Or was a thing of earth. (c.) O, come Icilius;  
Do but appear, and thou art vindicated.

*Enter ICILIUS, L.*

Virginia! sweet Virginia! sure I heard

My name pronounc'd. [*Both, c.*] Was it by thee, Virginia?  
Thou dost not answer? Then it was by thee—  
O! would'st thou tell me why thou nam'dst Icilius!

*Virginia.* My father is incens'd with thee. Dentatus  
Has told him of the new Decemvirate,  
How they abuse their office. You, he knows,  
Have favoured their election, and he fears  
May have some understanding of their plans.

*Icil.* He wrongs me then!

*Virginia.* I thank the gods!

*Icil.* For me!

Virginia? Do you thank the gods for me?  
Your eye is moist—yet that may be for pity;  
Your hand doth tremble—that may be for fear;  
Your cheek is cover'd o'er with blushes! What,  
O what can that be for?

*Virginia.* Icilius, leave me!

*Icil.* Leave thee, Virginia? O! a word—a word  
Trembles upon my tongue, which, if it match  
The thought that moves thee, now, and thou wilt let me  
Pronounce that word, to speak that thought for thee,  
I'll breathe—though I expire in the extacy  
Of uttering it.

*Virginia.* Icilius, will you leave me?

*Icil.* Love! Love! Virginia! Love! If I have spoke  
Thy thought aright, ne'er be it said again,  
The heart requires more service than the tongue  
Can, at its best, perform. My tongue hath serv'd  
Two hearts—but, lest it should o'erboast itself,  
Two hearts with but one thought. Virginia!  
Virginia, speak— [*Virginia covers her face with her hands.*]  
O, I have lov'd thee long:  
So much the more extatic my delight,  
To find thee mine at length.

*Virginia.* My secret's yours.  
Keep it, and honour it, Icilius.

*Enter VIRGINIUS and DENTATUS behind, M. D.*

*Vir.* Icilius here!

*Virginia.* I ask thee now to leave me.

*Icil.* Leave thee! who leaves a treasure he has coveted  
So long, and found so newly, ere he scans it  
Again, and o'er again; and asks and answers,  
Repeats and answers, answers and repeats,  
The half-mistrustful, half-assured question—

And is it mine indeed ?

*Virginia.* Indeed ! indeed !

Now leave me.

*Icil.* I must see thy father first,  
And lay my soul before him.

*Virginia.* Not to-night.

*Icil.* Now worse than ever, dear Virginia !  
Can I endure his doubts ; I'll lay my soul  
Naked before him—win his friendship quite,  
Or lose myself for ever !

[*Going, is met by Virginius*

*Vir. (R. C.)* Stop, Icilius !

Thou seest that hand ? It is a Roman's, boy ;  
'Tis sworn to liberty—It is the friend  
Of honour.—Dost thou think so ?

*Icil. (R. C.)* Do I think  
Virginius owns that hand ?

*Vir. (R.)* Then you'll believe  
It has an oath deadly to tyranny,  
And is the foe of falsehood ! By the gods,  
Knew it the lurking place of treason, though  
It were a brother's heart, 'twould drag the caitiff  
Forth. Dar'st thou take that hand ?

*Icil.* I dare, Virginius.

*Vir.* Then take it ! Is it weak in thy embrace ?  
Returns it not thy gripe ? Thou wilt not hold  
Faster by it, than it will hold by thee !  
I overheard thee say, thou wast resolv'd  
To win my friendship quite. Thou canst not win  
What thou hast won already !—You will stay  
And sup with us to night ?

*Den.* To be sure, he will !

*Vir.* And hark you, sir,  
At your convenient time, appoint a day  
Your friends and kinsmen may confer with me—  
There is a bargain I would strike with you.  
Come, to the supper-room. [*Pausing, R.—Virginia stands*  
*L. Icil. c.]* Do you wait for me  
To lead Virginia in, or will you do it ?

[*Icilius goes eagerly to Virginia, and exit with her, R.*  
Come on, I say ; come on. Your hand, Dentatus.

[*Exeunt, R.*



## ACT II

SCENE I.—*A Street.*

*Enter* PUBLIUS, R. and SEXTUS, L.

*Pub.* This way! We muster at the Flaminian gate.

*Sext.* Shall we not wait for Decius?

*Pub.* No; were he ten times Decius. They'll have already begun their march. Come on.

*Enter* NUMITORIUS.

*Num.* Do you belong to the fourth legion?

*Pub.* We do.

*Num.* They are upon their march, then.

*Pub.* I told you so. Come on! come on!

[*Exeunt Soldiers.*]

*Enter* LUCIUS.

*Luc.* Numitorius, what soldiers were those that just now parted from you?

*Num.* Soldiers hastening to overtake the army, that's now upon it's march.

*Luc.* 'Tis all confirmed then; the Sabines are in force upon our borders.

*Num.* I pray you tell me something new! Know you not the senate has met, and the Decemvirs have come off triumphant, in spite of all opposition?

*Luc.* Should they have been opposed in such a strait as this?

*Num.* Aye, should they. They dared not have armed a single citizen without the order of the Senate; which, had they not obtained, the country would have been left naked to the foe, and then they had been forced to make room for more popular magistrates.

*Luc.* Why were they not opposed then?

*Num.* Did not I tell you they were opposed. Caius Claudius, Appius's own uncle, and Honorius, that noble senator, opposed them: and it was like to go against them, but for the brawling insolence of Spurius Oppius, and the effrontery of the head Decemvir, backed by the young Patricians.

*Luc.* So they are empowered to take up arms?

*Num.* To be sure they are; and they have done so.—

One body has already marched, and by this time, no doubt, has come to blows with the enemy. The levy is still proceeding. All the Decemvirs, but Appius, take the field. He remains in Rome to keep good order, that is the violater of all order. Why, where have you been, Lucius, to have felt no movement of so great and wide a stir? Your brother meets Virginius at his house to-day.—Come with me thither; for you, I know, are bid. Lucius, there's no huzzaing for your Decemvirs now!—Come on, we have outstaid the hour. [Exeunt, L.]

SCENE II.—*Virginius's House.*

*Enter VIRGINIUS, ICILIUS, NUMITORIUS, LUCIUS, and others, L.*

*Vir. (c.)* Welcome, Icilius! Welcome, friends! Icilius, I did design to speak with you of feasting And merriment, but war is now the word; One that unlovingly keeps time with mirth, Unless war's own—whene'er the battle's won, And safe carousing comrades drink to victory!

*Icil.* Virginius! have you changed your mind?

*Vir.* My mind?

What mind? How now! Are you that boy, Icilius! You set your heart so earnestly upon A dish of poor confections, that to balk you Makes you look blank! I did design to feast you Together with your friends—The times are changed—The march, the tent, the fight, becomes us now!

*Icil. (L. c.)* Virginius!

*Vir.* Well?

*Icil.* Virginius!

*Vir.* How the boy

Reiterates my name.

*Icil.* There's not a hope I have, but is the client of Virginius.

*Vir. (c.)* Well, well! I only meant to put it off; We'll have the revel yet! the board shall smoke! The cup shall sparkle, and the jest shall soar And mock us from the roof! Will that content you? Not till the war be done tho'—Yet, ere then, Some tongue, that now needs only wag, to make The table ring, may have a tale to tell So petrifying, that it cannot utter it! I'll make all sure, that you may be my guest

At any rate—altho' you should be forced  
To play the host for me and feast yourself.

Look here, *[Shows a parchment to Icilius.]*

How think you? Will it meet the charge?

Will it not do? We want a witness tho'!

I'll bring one; whom if you approve, I'll sign

The bond. I'll wait upon you instantly. *[Exit, R.]*

*Luc. (L.)* How feel you now, Icilius?

*Icil. (C.)* Like a man

Whom the next moment makes, or quite unmakes.

With the intensity of exquisite

Suspense, my breathing thickens, and my heart

Beats heavily, and with remittant throb,

As like to lose its action—See! my hope

Is bless'd! I live! I live! *[Stands, L.]*

*Enter VIRGINIUS, R. conducting VIRGINIA, with  
NUMITORIUS.*

*Vir. (R.) [Holding his daughter's hand.]* You are my  
witnesses,

That this young creature I present to you,

I do pronounce—my profitably cherish'd

And most deservedly beloved child;

My daughter, truly filial—both in word

And act—yet even more in act than word.

And—for the man who seeks to win her love—

A virgin, from whose lips a soul as pure

Exhales, as e'er responded to the blessing

Breath'd in a parent's kiss. *[Kissing her.]* Icilius!

*[Icilius rushes towards Virginus and kneels,*

Since

You are upon your knees, young man, look up;

And lift your hands to heaven—You will be all

Her father has been—added unto all

A lover would be!

*Icil.* All that man should be

To woman, I will be to her!

*Vir.* The oath

Is registered! *[Icilius rises.]* Didst thou but know,

*[Takes a hand of each.]* young man,

How fondly I have watch'd her, since the day

Her mother died, and left me to a charge

Of double duty bound—how she hath been

My ponder'd thought by day, my dream by night,

My prayer, my vow, "my offering, my praise,"

My sweet companion, pupil, tutor, child!—  
 Thou would'st not wonder, that my drowning eye,  
 And choking utterance, upbraid my tongue  
 That tells thee, she is thine! [*Joins their hands.*] Icilius,  
 I do betroth her to thee; let but the war  
 Be done—you shall espouse her. Friends, a word!

[*Virginus and the rest exeunt M. D.*]

*Icil.* (c.) [*Holding her hand.*] Virginia! my Virginia  
 I am all

Dissolv'd—o'erpower'd with the munificence  
 Of this auspicious hour—And thou, not mov'st—  
 Nor look'st—nor speak'st—to bless me with a sigh,  
 Of sweet according joy!—I love thee, but  
 To make thee happy! If to make thee so  
 Be bliss denied to me—lo, I release  
 The gifted hand—that I would faster hold,  
 Than wretches, bound for death, would cling to life—  
 If thou would'st take it back—then take it back.

*Virginia.* I take it back—to give it thee again!

*Icil.* O help me to a word will speak my bliss,  
 Or I am beggar'd—No! there is not one!  
 There cannot be; for never man had bliss  
 Like mine to name.

*Virginia.* “Thou dost but beggar me,  
 Icilius, when thou mak'st thyself a bankrupt;  
 Placing a value on me far above  
 My real little worth.”—I'd help thee to  
 A hundred words; each one of which would far  
 O'er-rate thy gain, and yet no single one  
 Rate over high!

*Icil.* Thou could'st not do it! No;  
 Thou could'st not do it! Every term of worth  
 Writ down and doubl'd, then the whole summ'd up,  
 Would leave with thee a rich remainder still!—  
 Pick from each rarer pattern of thy sex  
 Her rarest charm, till thou hast every charm  
 Of soul and body, that can blend in woman,  
 I would out-paragon the paragon  
 With thee!

*Virginia.* “And if thou would'st, I'd find thee, for  
 Thy paragon, a mate—if that can be  
 A mate which doth transcend the thing, 'tis ta'en  
 To match—would make thy paragon look poor,  
 And I would call that so o'ermatching mate  
 Icilius.”

*Icil.* No ! I will not let thee win  
On such a theme as this !

*Virginia.* Nor will I drop  
The controversy, that the richer makes me  
The more I lose.

*Icil.* My sweet Virginia,  
We do but lose and lose, and win and win ;  
“ Playing for nothing but to lose and win ;”  
Then let us stop the game—and thus I stop it.

[*Kisses her.*]

*Re-enter VIRGINIUS, and the others, M. D.*

*Vir.* Witness, my friends, that seal ! Observe, it is  
A living one ! It is Icilius' seal ;  
And stamp'd upon as true and fair a bond—  
Tho' it receive the impress blushing—  
As ever signet kiss'd ! Are all content ?  
Speak else ! She is thy free affianc'd wife ;  
Thou art her free affianc'd husband ! Come,  
We have o'erdrawn our time—Farewell, Virginia ;  
Thy future husband for a time must be  
Bellona's. To thy tasks again, my child ;  
Be thou the bride of study for a time.  
Farewell !

*Virginia.* (R.) My father !

*Vir.* (R.) May the gods protect thee.

*Virginia.* My father !

*Vir.* Does the blood forsake thy cheek ?  
Come to my arms once more ! Remember, girl,  
The first and foremost debt a Roman owes,  
Is to his country ; and it must be paid,  
If need be, with his life. Why, how you hold me !  
Icilius, take her from me ! [*Icilius goes to her.*] Hon  
Within !

Within there ! Servia !

*Enter SERVIA.*

Look to your child !

Come, boy.

*Icil.* (R.) Farewell, Virginia.

*Vir.* Take her in !

*Virginia.* The gods be with thee, my Icilius—Father,  
The gods be with thee—and Icilius.

*Vir.* I swear, a battle might be fought and won  
In half the time ! Now, once for all, farewell ;



Your sword and buckler, boy! The foe! the foe!  
 Does he not tread on Roman ground? Come on!  
 Come on! charge on him! drive him back! or die!  
*[Exeunt Virginia and Servia, R.—the rest.]*

SCENE III.—*Appius's House.*

*Enter* APPIUS, L.

*App.* It was a triumph, the achieving which  
 O'erpaid the risk was run—and that was great.  
 They have made trial of their strength, and learn'd  
 Its value from defeat. (c.) The Senate knows  
 Its masters now: and the Decemvirate,  
 To make it reign eternal, only wants  
 Its own decree, which little pains will win.  
 Ere this, the foe has, for his mad invasion,  
 Been paid with chastisement. "Retir'd within  
 His proper limits, leisure waits upon us  
 To help us to the recompense, decreed  
 To our noble daring, who have set ourselves  
 In such high seats, as at our feet array  
 The wealth, and power, and dignity of Rome  
 In absolute subjection! Tyranny!  
 How godlike is thy port! 'Thou giv'st, and tak'st,  
 And ask'st no other leave, than what thy own  
 Imperial will accords. Jove does no more!"  
 Now, Claudius——

*Enter* CLAUDIUS, R.

*Claud.* We have suffer'd a defeat!

*App.* What! The Decemvirs fly!

*Claud.* The soldiers fight  
 With only half a heart. "The other half  
 Looks on, and cares not which side proves the winner."

*App.* (c.) Then decimate them. Traitors! Recreants!  
 Why, we shall have them at our doors!  
 Have we lost ground, my Claudius?

*Claud.* (R. c.) None, except  
 What we've retrac'd in fame. We strove to teach  
 The enemy their road lay backwards, but  
 They would not turn their faces for us. Each  
 Retains his former line.

*Enter* MARCUS, R.

*App.* What news?

*Marc.* (R.) The Æqui  
Still press upon us. Rumours are afloat  
Of new disasters, which the common cry,  
Be sure, still multiplies and swells. Dentatus,  
That over-busy, crabbed veteran,  
Walks up and down among the people, making  
Your plans his theme of laughter. Nought he stints  
That may reflect you in an odious light,  
And lower the decemvirate.

*App.* A dungeon  
Would do good service to him ! Once within,  
Strangling were easy ! We must stop his mouth—  
“ Unwholesome food—or liquor ”—Where was he  
When last you heard him ?

*Marc.* In the Forum.

*App.* So !  
He is past service, is he not ? Some way  
To clear the city of him. Come, we'll hear him,  
And answer him, and silence him ! 'Tis well  
The dog barks forth his spleen ; it puts us on  
Our guard against his bite. Come, to the Forum  
[*Exeunt, R.*

#### SCENE IV.—*The Forum.*

*Enter DENTATUS, TITUS, SERVIUS, and Citizens, R.*

*Tit.* (c.) What's to be done ?

*Den.* (c.) We'll be undone—that's to be done.

*Ser.* We'll do away with the Decemvirate.

*Den.* You'll do away with the Decemvirate ?—The Decemvirate will do away with you ! You'll do away with yourselves ! Do nothing—The enemy will do away with both of you. In another month, a Roman will be a stranger in Rome. A fine pass we are come to, Masters !

*Tit.* (R.) But something must be done.

*Den.* Why, what would you have ? You shout and clap your hands, as if it were a victory you heard of ; and yet you cry—Something must be done ! Truly I know not what that something is, unless it be to make you General. How say you, Masters ?

*Ser.* We'd follow any man that knew how to lead us, and would rid us of our foes, and the Decemvirate together.

*Den.* You made these Decemvirs ! You are strangely discontented with your own work ! And you are over-

cunning workmen too. You put your materials so firmly together, there's no such thing as taking them asunder! What you build, you build—except it be for your own good.—There you are bunglers at your craft. Ha! ha! ha! I cannot but laugh to think how you toiled, and strained, and sweated, to rear the stones of the building one above another, when I see the sorry faces you make at it.

*Tit.* But tell us the news again.

*Den.* Is it so good? Does it so please you? Then prick your ears again, and listen. We have been beaten again—beaten back on our own soil. Rome has seen its haughty masters fly before chastisement, like slaves—returning cries for blows—and all this of your Decemvirs, gentlemen.

*1st Cit.* (R.) Huzza for it again! [*The people shout.*]

*2nd Cit.* (R.) Hush! Appius comes.

*Den.* (R.) And do you care for that? You that were, just now, within a stride of taking him and his colleagues by the throat? You'll do away with the Decemvirs, will you! And let but one of them appear, you dare not, for your life, but keep your spleen within your teeth! Listen to me, now! I'll speak the more for Appius—

*Enter APPIUS, CLAUDIUS, and MARCUS, preceded by*  
*Lictors, R. U. E.*

I say, to the eternal infamy of Rome, the foe has chased her sons, like hares, on their own soil, where they should prey like lions—and so they would, had they not keepers to tame them.

*App.* (C.) What's that you are saying to the people, Siccus Dentatus?

*Den.* I am regaling them with the news.

*App.* The news?

*Den.* (R. C.) Ay, the news—the newest that can be had; and the more novel, because unlooked for. Who ever thought to see the eagle in the talons of the kite?

*App.* It is not well done in you, Dentatus, to chafe a sore. It makes it rankle. If your surgery has learned no better, it should keep its hands to itself! You have very little to do, to busy yourself after this fashion.

*Den.* I busy myself as I like, Appius Claudius.

*App.* I know you do, when you labour to spread disaffection among the people, and bring the Decemvirs into contempt.

*Den.* The Decemvirs



*App.* Ha ! dare you say so ?

*Den.* [*Closer to him.*] Dare ! I have dared cry “ Come on ! ” to a cohort of bearded warriors—Is it thy smooth face should appal me ? Dare ! it never yet flurried me to use my arm—Shall I not, think you, be at my ease, when I but wag my tongue ? Dare, indeed !

[*Laughing contemptuously.*]

*App.* Your grey hairs should keep company with honestest speech !

*Den.* Shall I show you, Appius, the company they are wont to keep ? Look here ! and here ! [*Uncovering his forehead and shewing scars.*] These are the vouchers of honest deeds—such is the speech with which my grey hairs keep company. I tell you, to your teeth, the Decemvirs bring themselves into contempt.

*App.* What, are they not serving their country at the head of her armies ?

*Den.* They’d serve her better in the body of her armies ! I’d name for thee, a hundred Centurions would make better generals. A common soldier, of a year’s active service, would take his measures better. Generals ! Our generals were wont to teach us how to win battles.—Tactics are changed—Your generals instruct us how to lose them.

*App.* Do you see my lictors ?

*Den.* There are twelve of them.

*App.* What, if I bid them seize thee ?

*Den.* They’d blush to do it.

*App.* Why now, Dentatus, I begin to know you ;  
I fancied you a man that lov’d to vent  
His causeless anger in an under breath,  
And speak it in the ear—and only then  
When there was safety ! Such a one, you’ll own,  
Is dangerous ; and, to be trusted as  
A friend or foe, unworthy. But I see  
You rail to faces—Have you not so much  
Respect for Appius as to take him by  
The hand—when he confesses you have some  
Pretence to quarrel with his colleagues’ plans,  
And find fault with himself ? Which, yet you’ll own,  
May quite as well be kindly done, Dentatus,  
As harshly—Had you only to myself  
Declar’d your discontents, the more you had rail’d,  
The more I should have thank’d you.

*Den.* Had I thought——

*App.* And have you been campaigning then so long,  
And prosperously? and mistrust you, Siccus,  
That a young scarless soldier, like myself,  
Would listen to your tutoring? See, now,  
How much you have mistaken me! Dentatus,  
In a word—Can you assist the generals?  
And will you?

*Den.* I have all the will—but as  
For the ability——

*App.* Tut! Tut! Dentatus,  
You vex me now! This coyness sits not well on you.  
You know, as well as I, you have as much  
Ability as will. I would not think you  
A man that loved to find fault, but to find fault  
Surely the evil you complain of, you  
Would lend a hand to remedy! See, now,  
'Tis fairly put to you—what say you?

*Den.* Appius!  
You may use me as you please.

*App.* And that will be,  
As you deserve! I'll send you as my Legate,  
To the army! [*Shout from the people.*] Do you hear your  
friends, Dentatus?

A lucky omen that! Away! away!  
Apprise your house—prepare for setting out.  
I'll hurry your credentials—Minutes now  
Rate high as hours! Assist my colleagues with  
Your counsel—if their plans displease you, why  
Correct them—change them—utterly reject them;  
And if you meet obstruction—notice me,  
And I will push it by—There now! Your hand!—  
Again! Away! All the success attend you,  
That Appius wishes you!

*Den.* Success is from  
The gods; whose hand soe'er it pleases them  
To send it by—I know not what success  
'Tis Appius' wish they send;—but this I know—  
I am a soldier; and, as a soldier, I  
Am bound to serve. All the success I ask,  
Is that which benefits my country, Appius. [*Exit Den., I.*

*App.* (c.) You have serv'd her overlong! [*Aside.*]

Now for our causes.

[*Appius ascends the Tribunal near R. S. E.*  
*Claud.* (L. c.) [*To Marcus.*] Do you see the drift of this?  
*Marc.* (L. c.) I cannot guess it.

*Claud.* Nor I.

*App.* [*To a Plebeian, c.*] Are you the suitor in this cause?

Speak !

*Plebeian.* Noble Appius, if there's law in Rome  
To right a man most injur'd, to that law  
Against you proud Patrician I appeal.

*App.* No more of that, I say ! Because he's rich  
And great, you call him proud ! 'Tis not unlike,  
Because you're poor and mean, you call yourself  
Injur'd.—Relate your story ; and, so please you,  
Spare epithets !

*Plebeian.* Grant me a minute's pause,  
I shall begin.

[*VIRGINIA at this moment crosses the stage with her Nurse, and is met by Numitorius, who holds her in conversation ; Appius rivets his eyes upon her*

*Num.* (c.) You have heard the news ?

*Virginia.* (c.) What news ? dear uncle !

*Num.* Step  
Aside with me, I'll tell you.

[*Takes her a little farther from the Tribunal.*

*App.* Can it be  
A mortal that I look upon ?

*Virginia.* They are safe !  
I thank the gods !

*App.* Her eyes look up to heaven  
Like something kindred to it—rather made  
To send their glances down, and fill the earth  
With worship and with gratulation—What  
A thrill runs up and down my veins ; and all throughout  
me !

*Plebeian.* Now, most noble Appius—

*App.* Stop !  
Put off the cause, I cannot hear it now !  
Attend to-morrow ! An oppressive closeness  
Allows me not to breathe—Lictors ! make clear  
The ground about the Rostrum !

[*Descends and approaches Claudius with precipitation.*  
*Claudius ! Claudius !—*

Marcus, go you and summon my physician  
To be at home before me. [*Exit Marcus.*] *Claudius*  
*Claudius ! there ! there !*

*Virginia.* (L.) You send a messenger to-night ?

*App.* (R. c.) Paint me that smile ! I never saw a smile

Till now My Claudius, is she not a wonder ?  
 I know not whether in the state of girlhood  
 Or womanhood to call her.—'Twixt the two  
 She stands, as that were loth to lose her, this  
 To win her most impatient. The young year,  
 Trembling and blushing 'twixt the striving kisses  
 Of parting spring and meeting summer, seems  
 Her only parallel !

*Num.* 'Tis well ! I'll send  
 Your father word of this. But have you not  
 A message to Icilius ?

*App.* Mark you, Claudius ?  
 There is a blush !—I must possess her.

*Virginia.* Tell him,  
 I think upon him—Farewell, Numitorius !

[*Exit with Servia, r.*

*Num.* (R.) Farewell, Virginia.

*Claud.* (R. c.) Master, will you tell me  
 The name of that young maiden ?

*Num.* She is called  
 Virginia, daughter of Virginius ;  
 A Roman citizen, and a centurion  
 In the army.

*Claud.* Thank you ; she is very like  
 The daughter of a friend of mine. Farewell.

*Num.* Farewell !

[*Exit, r.*

*App.* (L. c.) I burn, my Claudius ! brain and heart.  
 There's not

A fibre in my body but's on fire !  
 With what a gait she moves ! Such was not Hebe,  
 Or Jupiter had sooner lost his heaven,  
 Than changed his cup-bearer—a step like that  
 The rapture-glowing clouds might well bear up,  
 And never take for human ! Find me, Claudius,  
 Some way to compass the possession of her.

*Claud.* 'Tis difficult—Her father's of repute ;  
 The highest of his class.

*App.* I guessed it ! (R. c.) Friends  
 Are ever friends, except when friends are needed.

*Claud.* Nay, Appius !—

*App.* (R.) If thou canst not give me hope,  
 Be dumb !

*Claud.* A female agent may be used  
 With some success.

*App.* How ? How ?

*Claud.* To tamper with  
That woman that attends her.

*App.* Set about it.

*Claud.* Could she but be induced to help you to  
A single meeting with her.

*App.* Claudius! Claudius!

Effect but that.

*Claud.* I'll instantly about it.

*App.* (c.) Spare not my gold—nor stop at promises.  
I will fulfil them fast as thou can'st make them.

To purchase such a draught of extacy

I'd drain a kingdom—Set about it, Claudius!

Away! I will not eat, nor drink, nor sleep,

Until I hear from thee!

*Claud.* (L. c.) Depend upon me!

*App.* I do, my Claudius! for my life—my life!

[*Exeunt Appius, M. D. Claudius, L.*

END OF ACT II.

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## ACT III

SCENE I.—*Appius's House.*

*Enter APPIUS, L.*

It is not love, (c.) if what I've felt before  
And call'd by such a name, be love—a thing  
That took its turn—that I could entertain,  
Put off, or humour—'tis some other thing;  
Or if the same, why in some other state—  
Or I am not the same—or it hath found  
Some other part of sensibility  
More quick, whereon to try its power, and there  
Expend it all? Now, Claudius, your success?

*Enter CLAUDIUS,*

*Claud.* (R.) Nothing would do, yet nothing left undone!  
She was not to be purchas'd

*App.* (R. c.) Did she guess—

*Claud.* She could not,

So guarded was my agent; who described you  
A man of power, of noble family,



And regal fortune—one that ask'd not what  
His pleasures cost—no further made disclosure.

*App.* (c.) And did it nothing move her, Claudius?

*Claud.* (R. c.) Nothing.

The more my agent urg'd, the more she shrunk  
And wither'd hag grew callous; further press'd,  
And with more urgent importuning, ire  
And scorn, in imprecations and invectives  
Vented upon the monster (as she call'd him)  
That would pollute her child, compell'd my advocate  
To drop the suit she saw was hopeless.

*App.* Now

Had I a friend indeed

*Claud.* Has Appius need

To search for such a friend, and Claudius by him?

*App.* Friends ever are provisionally friends—  
Friends for so far—Friends just to such a point  
And then “farewell!” friends with an understanding—  
As “should the road be pretty safe”—“the sea  
Not over-rough” and so on—friends of *ifs*  
And *buts*—no friends!—O, could I find the man  
Would be a simple, thorough-going friend!

*Claud.* I thought you had one, Appius.

*App.* (L. c.) So thought Appius.

Till Appius thought upon a test of friendship,  
He fears he would not give unto himself,  
Could he be Appius' friend.

*Claud.* Then Appius has

A truer friend than Appius is to Appius.

I'll give that test!

[*Meet at C. and join hands.*]

*App.* What! you'd remove her father  
And that Icilius whom you told me of?

*Claud.* Count it as done.

*App.* My Claudius, is it true?

Can I believe it? art thou such a friend,  
That, when I look'd for thee to stop and leave me,  
I find thee keeping with me, step by step;  
And even in thy loving eagerness  
Outstriding me? I do not want thee, Claudius,  
To soil thy hand with their Plebeian blood.

*Claud.* What would'st thou, then?

*App.* I was left guardian to thee—

*Claud.* Thou wast.

*App.* Amongst the various property  
Thy father left, were many female slaves.

*Claud.* Well ?

*App.* It were easy for thee, (were it not ?)  
To invent a tale, that one of them confess'd  
She had sold a female infant (and of course  
Thy slave) unto Virginius' wife, who pass'd i.  
Upon Virginius as his daughter, which  
Supposititious offspring is this same  
Virginia ?

*Claud.* I conceive you.

*App.* To induce  
The woman to confirm your tale, would ask  
But small persuasion. Is it done ?

*Claud.* This hour.

I know the school, my Appius, where Virginia  
Pursues her studies ; thither I'll repair,  
And seize her as my slave at once. Do thou  
Repair to thy tribunal, whither, should  
Her friends molest me in the attempt, I'll bring her,  
And plead my cause before thee.

*App.* (L.) Claudius ! Claudius !  
How shall I pay thee ? O, thou noble friend !  
Power, fortune, life, whate'er belongs to Appius,  
Reckon as thine ! Away, away, my Claudius !

[*Exeunt Appius, L., Claudius, R.*]

## SCENE II.—*A Street in Rome.*

*Enter LUCIUS, L. meeting TITUS, SERVIUS, and CNEIUS.*

*Luc.* Well, Masters, any news of Siccus Dentatus from  
the camp ? How was he received by the Decemvirs ?

*Tit.* He was received well by the Decemvirs.

*Cne.* It wasn't then for the love they bear him.

*Tit.* But they expect he'll help them to return the cuffs  
they have gotten from the enemy.

*Servius.* Do you wish for a victory ?

*Luc.* Yes, if Dentatus wins it. 'Tis to our credit, Mas-  
ters—He's one of us.

*Ser.* And is not Spurius Oppius one of us ?

*Luc.* He is ; but he is in league with the patricians—  
“that is, the patrician Decemvirs.” He is but half a ple-  
beian, and that is the worse half.—“The better half he  
threw away when he became half a patrician.” I never  
liked your half-and-half gentry ; they generally combine  
the bad of both kinds, without the good of either.

*Ser.* Well, we shall have news presently. Your bro-  
ther, Icilius, has just arrived with despatches from the

camp. I met him passing through the Forum, and asked him what news he brought? He answered, none; but added, we might look for news of another kind than what we had been lately accustomed to hear. [*A shriek without, L.*

*Cne.* What's that?

*Tit.* Look yonder, Masters! See!

*Ser.* 'Tis Appius's client dragging a young woman along with him.

*Tit.* Let us stand by each other, Masters, and prevent him.

*Enter CLAUDIUS, L. dragging along VIRGINIA, followed by SERVIA, and others.*

*Servia.* (L. c.) Help! help! help!

*Luc.* (c.) Let go your hold!

*Claud.* (c.) Stand by!

She is my slave!

*Servia.* His slave? Help! help! His slave?  
He looks more like a slave than she! Good Masters!  
Protect the daughter of Virginius.

*Luc.* Release the maid.

*Tit.* Forbear this violence.

*Claud.* I call for the assistance of the laws;  
She is my slave.

*Servia.* She is my daughter, Masters,  
My foster-daughter; and her mother was  
A free-born woman—and her father is  
A citizen, a Roman—good Virginius,  
As I said before—Virginius, the Centurion,  
Whom all of you must know.—Help! help! I say,  
You see she cannot speak to help herself;  
Speak for her, Masters—help her, if you're men!

*Tit.* Let go your hold.

*Claud.* Obstruct me, at your peril.

*Luc.* We'll make you, if you will not.

*Claud.* Let me pass.

*Ser.* Let go your hold, once more.

*Claud.* Good Masters! patience—  
Hear me, I say—She is my slave—I wish not  
To use this violence, my friends; but may not  
A master seize upon his slave?—Make way,  
Or such of you as are dissatisfied  
Repair with me to the Decemvir.—Come,  
I only want my right!

*Tit.* Come on then!

*Ser.* Ay,



To the Decemvir !

*Servia.* Run, run for Numitorius !—Alarm our neighbours !—Call out Icilius's friends !—I shall go mad ! Help ! help ! help !

SCENE III.—*The Forum.*

*Enter APPIUS, R. U. E. preceded by Lictors.*

*App. (c.)* Will he succeed ?—Will he attempt it ?—Will he

Go through with it ?—[*Looking out, L.*]—No sign—I almost wish

He had not undertaken it ; yet wish,  
More than I wish for life, he may accomplish  
What he has undertaken. O ! the pause  
That precedes action ! It is vacancy  
That o'erweighs action's substance. What I fear  
Is, that his courage can't withstand her tears  
That will be sure to try and succour her ;  
Pointing, as 'twere, to every charm, and pleading  
With melting eloquence. I hear a sound  
As of approaching clamour—and the rush  
Of distant feet—He comes ! I must prepare  
For his reception.

[*APPIUS ascends the Tribunal. CLAUDIUS enters still holding VIRGINIA, followed by SERVIA ; Women and Citizens, crying "shame !"*

*Claud.* Do not press upon me ;  
Here's the Decemvir—he will satisfy you,  
Whether a master has a right or not  
To seize his slave when he finds her.

*Servia.* She is no slave  
Of thine ! She never was a slave ! Thou slave !  
To call her by that name—Ay ! threaten me !  
She is a free-born maid, and not a slave,  
Or never was a free-born maid in Rome !  
O ! you shall dearly answer for it !

*App.* Peace !  
What quarrel's this ? Speak, those who are aggrieved

*Enter NUMITORIUS, L.*

*Num. (L.)* Where is Virginia ? Wherefore do you hold  
That maiden's hand ?

*Claud.* Who asks the question ?

*Num.* I ! Her uncle, Numitorius.

*Claud.* Numitorius, you think yourself her uncle—  
 Numitorius,  
 No blood of yours flows in her veins, to give you  
 The title you would claim. Most noble Appius !  
 If you sit here for justice—as I think  
 You do, attend not to the clamour of  
 This man, who calls himself this damsel's *uncle*.  
 She is my property—was born beneath  
 My father's roof, whose slave her mother was,  
 Who (as I can establish past dispute)  
 Sold her an infant to Virginius' wife,  
 Who never had a child, and heavily  
 Revolv'd her barrenness. My slave I have found  
 And seiz'd—as who that finds his own (no matter  
 How long soever miss'd) should fear to take it ?  
 If they oppose my claim, they may produce  
 Their counter-proofs and bring the cause to trial !  
 But till they prove mine own is not mine own—  
 (An undertaking somewhat perilous)  
 Mine own I shall retain—yet giving them  
 Should they demand it, what security  
 They please, for re-producing her.

*App.* Why that  
 Would be but reasonable.

*Num.* Reasonable !  
*Claudius* !— [*With much vehemence—recollects himself.*]  
 He's but a mask upon the face  
 Of some more powerful contriver.— [*Aside.*]—Appius !  
 My niece's father is from Rome, thou know'st,  
 Serving his country. Is it not unjust,  
 In the absence of a citizen, to suffer  
 His right to his own child to be disputed ?  
 Grant us a day to fetch Virginius,  
 That he himself may answer this most foul  
 And novel suit—Meanwhile to me belongs  
 The custody of the maid—her uncle's house  
 Can better answer for her honour than  
 The house of Claudius. 'Tis the law of Rome  
 Before a final sentence, the defendant  
 In his possession is not to sustain  
 Disturbance from the plaintiff.

*Tit.* A just law.

*Ser.* And a most reasonable demand.

*All the Cits. (L.)* Ay ! Ay ! Ay !

*App.* Silence, you citizens ; will you restrain

Your tongues, and give your magistrate permission  
To speak? The law is just—most reasonable—  
I fram'd that law myself—I will protect  
That law!

*Tit.* "Most noble Appius!"

*Ser.* "A most just decree!"

*All the Cits.* "Ay! Ay!"

*App.* "Will you be silent? Will you please to wait  
For my decree, you most untractable  
And boisterous citizens! I do repeat it,"  
I fram'd that law myself, and will protect it.  
But are you, Numitorius, here defendant?  
That title, none but the reputed father  
Of the young woman has a right to—How  
Can I commit to thee what may appear  
The plaintiff's property; and if not his,  
Still is not thine? I'll give thee till to-morrow  
Ere I pass a final judgment—But the girl  
Remains with Claudius, who shall bind himself  
In such security as you require,  
To re-produce her at the claim of him  
Who calls her daughter. This is my decree.

*Num.* A foul decree. Shame! shame!

*Ser.* Aye, a most foul decree.

*Cne.* A villainous decree.

*Ser.* Most villainous!

*Servia.* (c.) Good citizens, what do you with our  
weapons,  
When you should use your own? Your hands!—your  
hands!

He shall not take her from us.

Gather round her,

And if he touch her, be it to his cost;

And if ye see him touch her, never more

Expect from us your titles—never more

Be husbands, brothers, lovers, at our mouths,

Or any thing that doth imply the name

Of men—except such men as men should blush for.

*App.* Command your wives and daughters, citizens,  
They quit the forum.

*Servia.* They shall not command us,  
That care not to protect us.

*App.* Take the girl,

If she is yours.

*Claud.* Stand by.

*Virginia.* O, help me ! help me !

*Enter ICILIUS, L.*

*Icil.* Virginia's voice. Virginia ! [*Rushes to her.*

*Virginia.* O, Icilius ! [*Falls fainting in his arms.*

*Icil.* Take her, good Numitorius.

*App.* You had better  
Withdraw, Icilius ; the affair is judged.

*Claud.* (L. c.) I claim my slave.

*Icil.* (c.) Stand back, thou double slave !  
Touch her, and I will tear thee, limb from limb,  
Before thy master's face.—She is my wife,  
My life, my heart, my heart's blood.—Touch her  
With but a look——

*App.* My Lictors, there, advance !  
See that Icilius quits the Forum.—Claudius,  
Secure your slave.

*Icil.* Lictors, a moment pause  
For your own sakes. Do not mistake these arms ;  
Think not the strength of any common man  
Is that they feel. They serve a charmed frame,  
The which a power pervades, that ten times trebles  
The natural energy of each single nerve  
To sweep you down as reeds.

*App.* Obey my orders !

*Icil.* Appius ! before I quit the Forum, let me  
Address a word to you.

*App.* Be brief, then !

*Icil.* Is't not enough you have depriv'd us, Appius,  
Of the two strongest bulwarks to our liberties  
Our tribunes and our privilege of appeal  
To the assembly of the people ? Cannot  
The honour of the Roman maids be safe ?  
Thou know'st this virgin is betroth'd to me,  
Wife of my hope—Thou shalt not cross my hope  
And I retain my life—attempt it not !—  
I stand among my fellow-citizens—  
His fellow-soldiers hem Virginus round ;  
Both men and gods are on our side ; but grant  
I stood alone, with nought but virtuous love  
To hearten me—alone would I defeat  
The execution of thy infamous  
Decree ! I'll quit the Forum now, but not  
Alone—my love ! my wife ! my free-born maid—  
The virgin standard of my pride and manhood

“Of peerless motto!—rich and fresh, and shining,  
And of device most rare and glorious”—

I'll bear off safe with me—unstain'd—untouch'd!

[*Embracing her.*

*App.* Your duty, Lictors—Claudius, look to your right.

*Icil.* True citizens!

*Tit.* Down with the traitor!

*Ser.* Down with him—slay him!

[*The Lictors and Claudius are driven back; Claudius takes refuge at Appius's feet, who has descended, and throws up his arms as a signal to both parties to desist—whereupon the people retire a little.*

*App.* So, friends! we thank you that you don't deprive us  
Of every thing; but leave your magistrates,  
At least their persons, sacred—their decrees,  
It seems, you value as you value straws,  
And in like manner break them. Wherefore stop  
When you have gone so far? You might, methinks,  
As well have kill'd my client at my feet,  
As threaten him with death before my face!  
Rise, Claudius! I perceive Icilius' aim:  
He labours to restore the tribuneship  
By means of a sedition. We'll not give him  
The least pretence of quarrel. (R. c.) We shall wait  
Virginus's arrival till to-morrow.  
His friends take care to notice him—The camp's  
But four hours journey from the city. Till  
To-morrow, then, let me prevail with you  
To yield up something of your right, and let  
The girl remain at liberty.

*Claud.* (R.) If they  
Produce security for her appearance,  
I am content.

*Tit.* I'll be your security.

*Ser.* And I.

*Citizens.* We'll all be your security

[*They hold up their hands.*

*Icil.* My friends,  
And fellow-citizens, I thank you; but  
Reserve your kindness for to-morrow, friends,  
If Claudius still persist—To-day, I hope,  
He will remain content with my security,  
And that of Numitorius, for the maid's  
Appearance.

*App.* See she do appear!—and come



Prepar'd to pay the laws more reverence,  
As I shall surely see that they receive it.

[*Exeunt Appius, Claudius, and Lictors, M. D*

*Icil.* Look up! look up! my sweet Virginia,  
Look up! look up! you will see none but friends.  
O that such eyes should e'er meet other prospects!

*Virginia.* Icilius! Uncle! lead me home! Icilius,  
You did not think to take a slave to wife?

*Icil.* I thought, and think, to wed a free-born maid;  
And thou, and thou alone, art she, Virginia!

*Virginia.* I feel as I were so—I do not think  
I am his slave! Virginius not my father!  
Virginius, my dear father, not my father!  
It cannot be; my life must come from him;  
For, make him not my father, it will go  
From me.—I could not live, an he were not  
My father!

*Icil.* Dear Virginia, calm thy thoughts.  
But who shall warn Virginius?

*Num.* I've ta'en care  
Of that; no sooner heard I of this claim,  
Than I despatch'd thy brother Lucius,  
Together with my son, to bring Virginius,  
With all the speed they could; and caution'd them  
(As he is something over quick of temper,  
And might snatch justice, rather than sue for it)  
To evade communication of the cause,  
And merely say his presence was required,  
Till we should have him with us. Come, Virginia;  
Thy uncle's house shall guard thee, till thou find'st  
Within thy father's arms a citadel,  
Whence Claudius cannot take thee.

*Icil.* He shall take  
A thousand lives first.

*Tit.* Ay, ten thousand lives.

*Icil.* Hear you, Virginia! Do you hear your friends?

*Virginia.* Let him take my life first: I am content  
To be his slave then—if I am his slave.

*Icil.* Thou art a free-born Roman maid, Virginia,  
All Rome doth know thee so, Virginia—  
All Rome will see thee so.

*Citizens.* We will! we will!

*Icil.* You'll meet us here to morrow?

*Citizens.* All! all!

*Icil.* Cease not to clamour 'gainst this outrage. Tell it

In every corner of the city ; and '  
 Let no man call himself a son of Rome,  
 Who stands aloof when tyranny assails  
 Her fairest daughter. Come, Virginia,  
 'Tis not a private, but a common wrong ;  
 'Tis every father's, lover's, freeman's cause ;  
 To-morrow ! fellow citizens, to-morrow !

*Citizens.* To-morrow ! *[Exeunt shouting, L*

SCENE IV.—*The Camp.*

*Enter S. OPPIUS and Q. F. VIBULANUS.*

*Opp.* (L.) Has he set out ?

*Vibul.* He has, my Oppius,  
 And never to return ! His guard's instructed  
 To take good care of him. There's not a man  
 But's ten times sold to us, and of our wishes  
 Fully possess'd. Dentatus will no more  
 Obstruct us in our plans. He did not like  
 The site of our encampment. He will find  
 At least the air of it was wholesome.

*Opp.* What

Report are they instructed to bring back ?

*Vibul.* They fell into an ambush—He was slain

*Opp.* But should the truth, by any means, come out

*Vibul.* Imprison them, and secretly despatch them,  
 Or open the dungeon doors, and let them 'scape.

*Opp.* I should prefer the latter method.

*Vibul.* Well,

That be our choice. But when it is determined  
 To spill blood otherwise than as it may,  
 Be spill'd, to hesitate about some drops  
 Is weakness, may be fatal.—Come, my friend,  
 Let us be seen about the camp, and ready,  
 With most admiring ear, to catch the tidings  
 Will be the wonder of all ears, but ours.  
 Here's one anticipates us !

*Enter MARCUS, R.*

Well, your news ?

*Marc.* (R.) Dentatus is no more ! but he has dearly sold  
 his life. The matter has been reported as you directed.  
 By few it is received with credence—by many with doubt ;  
 while some bold spirits stop not at muttering, but loudly  
 speak suspicion of foul play. A party that we met, a mile

beyond the lines, no sooner heard our story, than they set off to bring the body to the camp. Others have followed them. Fabius, we have your gage for safety.

*Vibul.* You have.—Come, let us shew ourselves.—Guilt hides,

And we must wear the port of innocence,  
That more than half way meets accusal.—Come.

[*Exeunt, R.*]

SCENE V.—*A Mountainous Pass.—The body of DENTATUS discovered on a bier, L. C.—Soldiers mourning over it.—Trumpets.*

*Enter VIRGINIUS, R. U. R.*

*Vir.* (c.) Where is Dentatus?—Where is the gallant soldier?

Ah, comrade! comrade! warm! yet warm! So lately  
Gone, when I would have given the world, only  
To say farewell to thee, or even get  
A parting look! O gallant, gallant soldier,  
The god of war might sure have spar'd a head  
Grown grey in serving him! My brave old comrade!  
The father of the field! Thy silver locks  
Other anointing should receive, than what  
Their master's blood could furnish!

*1st Soldier.* There has been treachery here.

*Vir.* What!

*1st Soldier.* The slain are all our own. None of the  
bodies are stripp'd—These are all Romans. There is  
not the slightest trace of an enemy's retreat—And now  
I remember they made a sudden halt, when we came in  
sight of them at the foot of the mountain—Mark'd you  
not, too, with what confused haste they told their story,  
directed us, and hurried on to the camp?

*Vir.* Revenge! The Decemvirs! Ay, the Decemvirs!  
For every drop of blood thou shalt have ten,  
Dentatus!

*Luc.* [*Without, R.*] What ho! Virginius! Virginius!

*Vir.* Here! here!

*Enter LUCIUS, R.*

*Luc.* 'Tis well you're found, Virginius!

*Vir.* What makes you from the city? Look!  
My Lucius, what a sight you're come to witness.  
My brave old comrade! Honest Siccius!

“ Siccus Dentatus, that true son of Rome,  
On whose white locks the mother look'd more proudly  
Than on the raven ones of her youngest and  
Most hopeful sons, is nothing but this,  
The sign and token of himself !” Look, comrades,  
Here are the foes have slain him—Not a trace  
Of any other—not a body stripp'd—  
Our father has been murdered—We'll revenge him  
Like sons ! Take up the body ! Bear it to  
The camp ; and as you move your solemn march,  
Be dumb—or, if you speak, be it but a word ;  
And be that word—Revenge !

[ *The Soldiers bear off the body R.—Virginus, following, is stopped by Lucius.*

*Luc.* (L. c.) Virginus !

*Vir.* I did not mind thee, Lucius !  
Uncommon things make common things forgot.  
Hast thou a message for me, Lucius ? Well !  
I'll stay and hear it—but be brief ; my heart  
Follows poor Dentatus.

*Luc.* (c.) You are wanted  
In Rome.

*Vir.* On what account ?

*Luc.* On your arrival  
You'll learn.

*Vir.* How ! is it something can't be told  
At once ? Speak out, boy ! Ha ! your looks are loaded  
With matter—Is't so heavy that your tongue  
Cannot unburden them ? Your brother left  
The camp on duty yesterday—hath ought  
Happen'd to him ? Did he arrive in safety ?  
Is he safe ? Is he well ?

*Luc.* He is both safe and well.

*Vir.* What then ? What then ? Tell me the matter,  
Lucius.

*Luc.* I have said  
It shall be told you.

*Vir.* Shall ! I stay not for  
That shall, unless it be so close at hand  
It stop me not a moment.—'Tis too long  
A coming. Fare you well, my Lucius.

[ *Going R.*

*Luc.* (c.) Stay,  
Virginus.—Hear me then with patience.

*Vir.* [ *Returns.* ] Well,  
I am patient.

*Luc.* Your Virginia—

*Vir.* (R. c.) Stop, my Lucius !

I am cold in every member of my frame !

If 'tis prophetic, Lucius, of thy news,

Give me such token as her tomb would, Lucius—

I'll bear it better.—Silence.

*Luc.* You are still——

*Vir.* I thank thee, Jupiter ! I am still a father !

*Luc.* You are, Virginius, yet.

*Vir.* What, is she sick ?

*Luc.* No.

*Vir.* Neither dead nor sick ! All well ! No harm !

Nothing amiss ! Each guarded quarter safe,

That fear may lay him down and sleep, and yet

This sounding the alarm ! I swear thou tell'st

A story strangely.—Out with't ! I have patience

For any thing, since my Virginia lives,

And lives in health !

*Luc.* You are requir'd in Rome,

To answer a most novel suit.

*Vir.* Whose suit ?

*Luc.* The suit of Claudius.

*Vir.* Claudius !

*Luc.* Him that's client

To Appius Claudius, the Decemvir.

*Vir.* What !

That pander ! Ha ! Virginia ! you appear

To couple them. What makes my fair Virginia

In company with Claudius ? Innocence

Beside lasciviousness ! His suit ! What suit ?

Answer me quickly !—Quickly ! lest suspense,

Beyond what patience can endure, coercing,

Drive reason from his seat !

*Luc.* He has claim'd Virginia.

*Vir.* Claim'd her ! Claim'd her !

On what pretence ?

*Luc.* He says she is the child

Of a slave of his, who sold her to thy wife.

*Vir.* Go on ;—you see I'm calm.

*Luc.* He seized her in

The school, and dragg'd her to the Forum, where

Appius was giving judgment.

*Vir.* Dragg'd her to

The Forum ! Well ?—I told you, Lucius

I would be patient.



*Luc.* Numitorius there confronted him !

*Vir.* Did he not strike him dead ?

True, true, I know it was in presence of

The Decemvir—O ! had I confronted him !

Well ! well ! the issue—Well ! (L.) o'erleap all else,

And light upon the issue ! Where is she ?

*Luc.* (R.) I was despatch'd to fetch thee, ere I could learn.

*Vir.* The claim of Claudius—Appius's client—Ha !

I see the master-cloud (c.)—this ragged one,

That lowers before, moves only in subservience

To the ascendant of the other—Jove,

With its own mischief break it and disperse it,

And that be all the ruin ! Patience ! Prudence !

Nay, prudence, but no patience.—Come ! a slave

Dragg'd through the streets in open day ! my child !

My daughter ! my fair daughter, in the eyes

Of Rome ! O ! I'll be patient. Come ! the essence

Of my best blood in the free common ear

Condemn'd as vile ! O ! I'll be patient. Come !

O they shall wonder.—I will be so patient. [*Exeunt, R.*]

END OF ACT III.

## ACT IV

SCENE I.—*Numitorius's House.*

*VIRGINIA* discovered c., supported by *SERVIA*.

*Virginia.* Is he not yet arrived ? Will he not come ?

*Servia.* He surely will.

*Virginia.* He surely will ! More surely

He had arrived already, had he known

How he is wanted—"They have miss'd him, Servia !

Don't tell me, but I know they have, or surely

We had not now been looking for him." Where's

My uncle ?

*Servia.* Finding you had fallen asleep

After such watching, he went forth to hear

If there were any tidings of Virginus.

He's here.

*Enter NUMITORIUS, R.—VIRGINIA looks at him inquisitively  
for some time*

*Virginia.* Not come ! not come ! I am sure of it !

He will not come. Do you not think he'll come?  
 Will not my father come? What think you, uncle?  
 Speak to me, speak—O give me any words,  
 Rather than what looks utter.

*Num. (c.)* Be compos'd!  
 I hope he'll come!

*Virginia.* A little while ago  
 You were sure of it—from certainty to hope  
 Is a poor step: you hope he'll come—One hope,  
 One little hope, to face a thousand fears!  
 “Do you not know he'll come? O, uncle, wherefore  
 Do you not know he'll come? Had I been you,  
 I had made sure of it.

*Num.* All has been done  
 That could be done.

*Virginia.* Poor all, that does so little!  
 One would imagine little needs be done  
 To bring a father to the succour of  
 His child!” ’Tis near the time!

*Num.* It is, indeed!

*Virginia.* Must I go forth with you? Must I again  
 Be dragg'd along by Claudius as his slave,  
 And none again to succour me?—*Icilius!*  
*Icilius!* Does your true betrothed wife  
 Call on you, and you hear not? My *Icilius!*  
 Am I to be your wife or Claudius' slave?  
 Where—where are you, *Icilius?*

*Enter ICILIUS, R*

*Icil.* My Virginia!  
 What's to be done, my friend? 'tis almost time.

[*To Numitorius.*

*Virginia.* I hear what you are saying—it is time—  
 “O, who could have believed it, that *Icilius*  
 Should ever say 'twas time to yield me to  
 Another's claim!”—And will you give me up?  
 Can you devise no means to keep me from him?  
 Could we not fly?

[*Icilius looks earnestly at Numitorius, who fixes his eyes  
 steadfastly on the ground: Icilius droops his head.*  
*I see!*—Your pledge  
 Must be redeem'd, although it cost you your  
 Virginia.

*Vir. [Without, R.]* Is she here?

*Virginia.* Ah!

*Enter VIRGINIUS.*

*Vir.* My child! my child!

[*Virginus rushes into her father's arms.*]

*Virginia.* I am! I feel I am! I know I am!

My father! my dear father! "I despair'd  
Of seeing you!" You're come! and come in time.  
And, O! how much the more in time, when hope  
Had given you up. O! welcome, welcome foot,  
Whose wished step is heard when least expected!"

*Vir. (c.)* Brother! Icilius! thank you! thank you.

—All

Has been communicated to me. Ay!  
And would they take thee from me? Let them try it!  
You've ta'en your measures well—I scarce could pass  
Along, so was I check'd by loving hands  
Ready to serve me. Hands with hearts in them!  
So thou art Claudius' slave? And if thou art,  
I'm surely not thy father! Blister'd villain!  
You have warn'd our neighbours, have you not, to attend  
As witnesses? To be sure you have. A fool  
To ask the question. Dragg'd along the streets too!  
'Twas very kind in him, to go himself  
And fetch thee—such an honour should not pass  
Without acknowledgement. I shall return it  
In full! In full!

*Num. (R. c.)* Pray you be prudent, brother.

*Virginia (c.)* Dear father, be advised—Will you not,  
father?

*Vir.* I never saw you look so much like your mother  
In all my life!

*Virginia.* You'll be advis'd, dear father?

*Vir.* It was her soul—her soul, that play'd just then  
About the features of her child, and lit them  
Into the likeness of her own. When first  
She plac'd thee in my arms—I recollect it  
As a thing of yesterday!—she wish'd, she said,  
'That it had been a man. I answer'd her,  
It was the mother of a race of men;  
And paid her for thee with a kiss. Her lips  
Are cold now—could they but be warm'd again,  
How they would clamour for thee!

*Virginia.* My dear father,  
You do not answer me! Will you not be advis'd?

*Vir.* I will not take him by the throat and strangle him!

But I could do it! I could do it! Fear not:  
 I will not strike while any head I love  
 Is in the way. It is not now a time  
 To tell thee—but, would'st thou believe it!—honest  
 Siccus Dentatus has been murder'd by them.

*Icil.* Murdered!

*Num.* Dentatus murder'd!

*Virginia.* O! how much  
 Have we to fear.

*Vir.* We have the less to fear.  
 I spread the news at every step—A fire  
 Is kindled, that will blaze at but a breath  
 Into the fiercest flame!

*Num.* 'Tis time. Let's haste  
 To the Forum.

[*Going, R*

*Vir.* Let the Forum wait for us!  
 Put on no show of fear, when villainy  
 Would wrestle with you! It can keep its feet  
 Only with cowards! I shall walk along  
 Slowly and calmly, with my daughter thus  
 In my hand: though with another kind of gripe  
 Than that which Claudius gave her. Well, I say,  
 I'll walk along thus, in the eyes of Rome.  
 Go you before, and what appeal soe'er  
 You please, make you to rouse up friends. For me,  
 I shall be mute—my eloquence is here—  
 Her tears—her youth—her innocence—her beauty!  
 If orators like these can't move the heart,  
 Tongues surely may be dumb.

*Icil.* (L. C.) A thousand hearts.  
 Have spoke already in her cause!

*Vir.* Come on!  
 Fear not! it is your father's grasp you feel.  
 O, he'll be strong as never man was, that  
 Will take thee from it. Come, Virginia;  
 We trust our cause to Rome and to the gods!

[*Virinius leads her off R. Icilius, &c. follow.*

## SCENE II.—*The Forum.*

*Enter APPIUS and LICTORS, R. U. E.*

*App.* See you keep back the people! Use your fasces  
 With firmer hands, or hearts. Your hands are firm  
 Enough, would but your hearts perform their office  
 "And leave your hands at liberty, not hang

Upon them with unseemly fears and clamours!"  
Look to it! "Time! hadst thou the theme that I have  
For speed, thou would'st not move this cripple's gait:  
But there's no urging thee, and thou wast ever  
Dull fellow traveller to young Impatience,,  
Dragging him back upon the road he pants  
To run, but cannot find without thee."

*Enter* MARCUS, R.

Well?

*Marc.* (R.) News has arriv'd, that speaks as if Dentatus  
Was murder'd by the order of your colleagues!  
There's not a face I meet but lowers with it:  
The streets are fill'd with thronging groups, that, as  
You pass, grow silent, and look sullen round on you,  
Then fall again to converse.

*App.* (c.) 'Tis ill-tim'd.

*Marc.* What say you, Appius?

*App.* Murder's ill-tim'd, I say,  
Happen when 'twill; but now is most ill-tim'd,  
When Rome is in a ferment, on account  
Of Claudius, and this girl he calls his slave;  
"For come when evil will, or how it will,  
All's laid to our account!" Look out and see  
If Claudius be approaching yet.

*[Marcus retires into back ground.]*

"My wish,  
Like an officious friend, comes out of time  
To tell me of success. I had rather far  
It had miscarried—they run high enough;  
They wanted not this squall on squall to raise them  
Above their present swell—the waves run high  
Enough, through which we steer;—but such a haven,  
If won, can never be too dearly won!"

*Marc.* [*Advancing.*] Claudius is here!

*Enter* CLAUDIUS, L.

*App.* Well, Claudius, are the forces  
At hand?

*Claud.* They are, and timely too; the people  
Are in unwonted ferment.

*App.* I have heard  
Word has arriv'd of old Dentatus' death;  
Which, as I hear, and wonder not to hear it,  
The mutinous citizen lay to our account.



*Claud.* That's bad enough; yet—

*App.* Ha! what's worse?

*Claud.* 'Tis best

At once to speak what you must learn at last  
Yet last of all would learn.

*App.* Virginius!

*Claud.* Yes!

He has arriv'd in Rome.

*Marc.* They are coming, Appius.

*Claud.* Fly Marcus, hurry down the forces!

[*Exit Marcus.*] Appius,

Be not o'erwhelm'd!

*App.* There's something awes me at  
The thought of looking on her father!

*Claud.* Look

Upon her, my Appius! Fix your gaze upon  
The treasures of her beauty, nor avert it  
Till they are thine. Haste! Your tribunal! Haste!

APPIUS *ascends the tribunal.*—*Enter* L. NUMITORIUS,  
ICILIUS, LUCIUS, CITIZENS, VIRGINIUS *leading his*  
*daughter*, SERVIA, and CITIZENS.—*A dead silence pre-*  
*vails.*—VIRGINIUS and Daughter stand L.

*Vir.* Does no one speak? I am defendant here.  
Is silence my opponent? Fit opponent  
To plead a cause too foul for speech! What brow  
Shameless gives front to this most valiant cause,  
That tries its prowess 'gainst the honour of  
A girl, yet lacks the wit to know, that they  
Who cast off shame should likewise cast off fear—  
“And on the verge o' the combat wants the nerve  
To stammer forth the signal?”

*App.* You had better,  
Virginius, wear another kind of carriage:  
This is not the fashion that will serve you.

*Vir.* (c.) [*Having left Virginia L. with Icilius.*] The  
fashion, Appius! Appius Claudius, tell me  
The fashion it becomes a man to speak in,  
Whose property in his own child—the offspring  
Of his own body, near to him as is  
His hand, his arm—yea, nearer—closer far,  
Knit to his heart—I say, who has his property  
In such a thing, the very self of himself,  
Disputed—and I'll speak so, Appius Claudius;  
I'll speak so—Pray you tutor me!

*App.* Stand forth,  
Claudius ! If you lay claim to any interest  
In the question now before us, speak ; if not,  
Bring on some other cause.

*Claud.* (R. C.) Most noble Appius —

*Vir.* And are you the man  
That claims my daughter for his slave ?—Look at me,  
And I will give her to thee.

*Claud.* She is mine, then :  
Do I not look at you ?

*Vir.* Your eye does, truly,  
But not your soul. I see it through your eye  
Shifting and shrinking—turning every way  
To shun me. “ You surprise me, that your eye,  
So long the bully of its master, knows not  
To put a proper face upon a lie,  
But gives the port of impudence to falsehood,  
When it would pass it off for truth.” Your soul  
Dares as soon show its face to me.—Go on,  
I had forgot ; the fashion of my speech  
May not please Appius Claudius.

*Claud.* I demand  
Protection of the Decemvir !

*App.* You shall have it.

*Vir.* Doubtless !

*App.* Keep back the people, Lictors ! What’s  
Your plea ? You say the girl’s your slave—Produce  
Your proofs.

*Claud.* My proof is here, which, if they can,  
Let them confront. The mother of the girl——

[*Virginus, about to speak, is withheld by Numitorius.*]

*Num.* (R. C.) Hold, brother ! Hear them out, or suffer  
me  
To speak.

*Vir.* (L. C.) Man, I must speak, or go mad !  
And if I do go mad, what then will hold me  
From speaking ? “ Were’t not better, brother, think you,  
To speak and not go mad, than to go mad  
And then to speak ? ” She was thy sister, too !  
Well, well, speak thou. I’ll try, and if I can  
Be silent.

[*Retires.*]

*Num.* Will she swear she is her child ?

*Vir.* [*Starting forward.*] To be sure she will—a most  
wise question that !  
Is she not his slave ? Will his tongue lie for him—

Or his hand steal—or the finger of his hand  
 Beckon, or point, or shut, or open for him?  
 To ask him if she'll swear!—Will she walk or run,  
 Sing, dance, or wag her head; do any thing  
 That is most easy done? She'll as soon swear!  
 What mockery it is to have one's life  
 In jeopardy by such a bare-fac'd trick!  
 Is it to be endur'd? I do protest  
 Against her oath!

*App.* No law in Rome, Virginius,  
 Seconds you. If she swear the girl's her child.  
 The evidence is good, unless confronted  
 By better evidence. Look you to that,  
 Virginius. I shall take the woman's oath

*Virginia.* Icilius!

*Icil.* Fear not, love; a thousand oaths  
 Will answer her.

*App.* [*To the Slave, L.*] You swear the girl's your child  
 And that you sold her to Virginius' wife,  
 Who pass'd her for her own. Is that your oath?

*Slave.* [*Coming round to the front of the Tribunal.*  
 It is my oath.

*App.* Your answer now, Virginius?

*Vir.* Here it is! [*Brings Virginia forward to c.*  
 Is this the daughter of a slave? I know  
 'Tis not with men, as shrubs and trees, that by  
 The shoot you know the rank and order of  
 The stem. Yet who from such a stem would look  
 For such a shoot? My witnesses are these—  
 The relatives and friends of Numitoria,  
 Who saw her, ere Virginia's birth, sustain  
 The burden which a mother bears, nor feels  
 The weight, with longing for the sight of it.  
 Here are the ears that listened to her sighs  
 In nature's hour of labour, which subsides  
 In the embrace of joy—the hands, that when  
 The day first look'd upon the infant's face,  
 And never look'd so pleas'd, help'd them up to it,  
 And bless'd her for a blessing—Here, the eyes  
 That saw her lying at the generous  
 And sympathetic fount, that at her cry  
 Sent forth a stream of liquid living pearl  
 To cherish her enamell'd veins. The lie  
 Is most unfruitful then, that takes the flower—  
 The very flower our bed connubial grew—

To prove its barrenness! Speak for me, friends ·  
Have I not spoke the truth?

*Women and Citizens.* You have, Virginius.

*App.* Silence, keep silence there. No more of that!  
You're very ready for a tumult, citizens.

[*Troops appear behind.*

Lictors, make way to let these troops advance!  
We have had a taste of your forbearance **masters,**  
And wish not for another.

*Vir.* 'Troops in the Forum!

*App.* Virginius, have you spoken?

*Vir.* If you have heard **me,**  
I have; if not, I'll speak **again.**

*App.* You need not,  
Virginius; I have evidence to give,  
Which, should you speak a hundred times again,  
Would make your pleading **vain.**

*Vir.* Your hand, Virginia!

Stand close to me.

[*Aside.*

*App.* My conscience will not let me  
Be silent. 'Tis notorious to you all,  
'That Claudius' father, at his death, declar'd me  
The guardian of his son—This cheat has long  
Been known to me. I know the girl is not  
Virginius' daughter.

*Vir.* Join your friends, Icilius,  
And leave Virginia to my care.

[*Aside, L. C.*

*App.* "The justice  
I should have done my client, unrequir'd,  
Now cited by him, how shall I refuse?"

*Vir.* Don't tremble, girl! don't tremble.

[*Aside.*

*App.* Virginius,  
I feel for you; but, though you were my father  
The majesty of justice should be sacred—  
Claudius must take Virginia home with him!

*Vir.* And if he must, I should advise him, Appius  
To take her home in time, before his guardian  
Complete the violation, which his eyes  
Already have begun. [*Turning to the Citizens.*] Friends  
fellow-citizens!

Look not on Claudius—Look on your Decemvir!  
He is the master claims Virginia!  
The tongue that told him she was not my child  
Are these—the costly charms he cannot purchase,  
Except by making her the slave of Claudius,

His client, his purveyor, that caters for  
 His pleasures—markets for him—picks, and scents,  
 And tastes, that he may banquet—serves him up  
 His sensual feast, and is not now asham'd,  
 In the open, common street, before your eyes—  
 Frightening your daughters and your matrons' cheeks  
 With blushes they ne'er thought to meet—to help him  
 To the honour of a Roman maid! my child!  
 Who now clings to me, as you see, as if  
 This second Tarquin had already coil'd  
 His arms around her. Look upon her, Romans!  
 Befriend her! succour her! see her not polluted  
 Before her father's eyes!—He is but one.  
 Tear her from Appius and his Lictors, while  
 She is unstain'd—Your hands! your hands! your hands!  
*Citizens.* They are yours, Virginius.

*App.* Keep the people back—  
 Support my Lictors, soldiers! Seize the girl,  
 And drive the people back.

*Icil.* (L.) Down with the slaves!

[*The people make a show of resistance, but, upon the  
 advancing of the Soldiers, retreat, and leave Icilius,  
 Virginius, and his Daughter, &c. in the hands of  
 Appius and his party.*]

Deserted!—Cowards! Traitors! “Let me free  
 But for a moment! I relied on you;  
 Had I relied upon myself alone  
 I had kept them still at bay! I kneel to you—  
 Let me but loose a moment, if 'tis only  
 To rush upon your swords!”

*Vir.* Icilius, peace!  
 You see how 'tis, we are deserted, left  
 Alone by our friends, surrounded by our enemies,  
 Nerveless and helpless

*App.* Away with him!

*Icil.* Virginia! Tyrant! My Virginia!

*App.* Away with him! [*Icilius is taken aside.*]  
 Separate them, Lictors!

*Vir.* Let them forbear awhile, I pray you, Appius:  
 It is not very easy. Though her arms  
 Are tender, yet the hold is strong, by which  
 She grasps me, Appius—Forcing them will hurt them  
 They'll soon unclasp themselves. Wait but a little—  
 You know you 're sure of her!

*App.* I have not time



To idle with thee ; give her to my Lictors.

*Vir.* Appius, I pray you wait ! If she is not  
My child, she hath been like a child to me  
For fifteen years. If I am not her father,  
I have been like a father to her, Appius,  
For even such a time. “ They that have liv’d  
So long a time together, in so near  
And dear society, may be allow’d  
A little time for parting.” Let me take  
The maid aside, I pray you, and confer  
A moment with her nurse ; perhaps she’ll give me  
Some token, will unloose a tie, so twin’d  
And knotted round my heart, that if you break it  
My heart breaks with it.

*App.* Have your wish. Be brief !  
Lictors, look to them.

*Virginia.* Do you go from me ?  
Do you leave me ? Father ! Father .

*Vir.* No, my child ;  
No, my Virginia—come along with me.

*Virginia.* Will you not leave me ? Will you take me  
with you ?  
Will you take me home again ? O, bless you, bless you !  
My father ! my dear father ! Art thou not ?  
My father ?

[*Virginius, perfectly at a loss what to do, looks anxiously  
around the Forum ; at length his eye falls on a butcher’s  
stall, L. with a knife upon it.*

*Vir.* This way, my child—No, no ; I am not going  
To leave thee, my Virginia ! I’ll not leave thee.

*App.* Keep back the people, soldiers ! Let them not  
Approach Virginius ! Keep the people back !

[*Virginius secures the knife in the folds of his toga.*  
Well, have you done ?

*Vir.* Short time for converse, Appius ;  
But I have.

*App.* I hope you are satisfied.

*Vir.* I am—

I am—that she is my daughter !

*App.* Take her, Lictors !

[*Virginia shrieks, and falls half dead upon her  
father’s shoulder.*

*Vir.* Another moment, pray you. Bear with me  
A little—’Tis my last embrace. ’Twill try  
Your patience beyond bearing, if you’re a man !

Lengthen it as I may, I cannot make it  
Long ! My dear child ! My dear Virginia !

[*Kissing her.*

There is only one way to save thine honour—  
'Tis this—

[*Stabs her, and draws out the knife.—She falls and dies, L.*  
Lo ! Appius ! with this innocent blood,  
I do devote thee to the infernal gods !  
Make way there !

*App.* Stop him ! Seize him !

*Vir.* If they dare

To tempt the desperate weapon that is madden'd  
With drinking my daughter's blood, why let them : Thus  
It rushes in amongst them. Way there ! Way !  
[*Exit through the Soldiers.*

“ *Enter HONORIUS and VALERIUS.*

*Hon.* What tumult's this ? —

The fair Virginia  
Kill'd by her father's hand, to save her from  
The lust of Appius Claudius ! Most foul cause  
That makes so dark a deed look fair ?

*App.* Remove  
The body, Lictors.

*Icil.* At the peril of  
Their lives ! Death is abroad, at work, and most  
In earnest when with such a feat as this  
He opens his exploits !

*App.* Obey me, slaves !

*Hon.* Defend the body, freemen. There's a spark  
Remaining still, which, though not strong enough  
To light it up with its own beauteous life,  
May yet rekindle liberty, and save  
Expiring Rome !

*Citizens.* It shall not be removed !

*App.* Seize it, I say !

*Val.* Back, slaves ! Give place to freemen

[*A tumult ensues ; the people deprive the Lictors of their  
fasces, and drive them, with the Soldiers, with Appius  
Claudius, &c. off the stage, then return shouting.*

*Icil.* Ay, shout and shout : a far more glorious cause  
Call'd for your voices, and you had not then  
The breath to whisper. How that ear had thank'd you,  
Had you as tender been of the jewel of  
Its precious sense as of the empty casket !

*Hon.* A litter, citizens, to lift the body,  
And bear it through the streets ; the spectacle  
Will fill all eyes with tears, all hearts with fire !

*Icil.* No hand but mine shall touch it : I will be  
Its living bier.

*Hon.* Icilius, listen to me !  
Thou art not thyself, and knowest not  
There is a sweeter strain than that of grief—  
Revenge, that drowns it. Suffer us to bear  
Thy bride along the streets ; a second, but  
Unstained Lucretia, buying with her blood  
The life of Rome and freedom !

*Icil.* Rome and freedom !  
There is your ransom ! such a costly one—  
O, you are dear, to be so dearly won !

[*Exeunt.*"]

END OF ACT IV.

## ACT V.

SCENE I.—*A Street.*

*Enter* APPIUS, L.

*App.* I do abjure all further league with them :  
They have most basely yielded up their pow'r,  
“ And compromis'd their glory. Had they died  
In their high seats, they had liv'd demi-gods ;  
But not they live to die like basest men ! ”  
Power gone, life follows ! (c.) Well ! 'tis well we know  
The worst ! (r.) The worst ?—The worst is yet to come,  
And, if I err not, hither speeds a messenger  
Whose heel it treads upon.

*Enter* VIBULANUS, *hastily*, and other Decemvirs, with  
MARCUS, L.

*Vibul.* Honorius and Valerius are elected  
To the Consulate.—Virginus is made Tribune.

*App.* “ No doubt they'd fill their offices, when ours  
Were laid so poorly down.—You have acted wisely ! ”

*Vibul.* Who could resist Virginus, raving at  
The head of the revolted troops, with all  
The commons up in arms ? Waste not dear time !  
Look to your safety, Appius. 'Tis resolv'd  
To cite you instantly before the Consuls.

*App.* Look to my safety, say you? You would bid  
A man, that's tumbling from a precipice  
A hundred fathoms high, and midway down,  
Look to his safety! What has he to snatch at?  
Air!—E'en so much have I.

*Vibul.* Withdraw awhile  
From Rome. We shall recall you with applause  
And honours.

*App.* Yes! you saw me on the brink—  
Beheld it giving way beneath my feet—  
And saw me tottering o'er the hideous leap,  
Whose sight sent round the brain with madd'ning whirl,  
With but a twig to stay me, which you cut,  
Because it was your friend that hung by it—  
Most kindly.

*Vibul.* Nay, "employ the present time  
In looking to your safety—" that secured,  
Reproach us as you will."

*App.* I am in your hands,  
Lead me which way you please.

*Icilius.* [*Without.*] Hold! Stand!

*Enter ICILIUS, with HONORIUS and VALERIUS as Consuls,  
NUMITORIUS and Lictors, L.*

*Icil.* Did I not tell you'twas the tyrant? Look,  
Was I not right? I felt that he was present  
Ere mine eye told it me.—You are our prisoner

*App.* On what pretence, Icilius?

*Icil.* Ask of poor  
Virginus, tottering between despair  
And madness, as he seeks the home, where once  
He found a daughter!

*App.* I demand due time  
To make up my defence.

*Icil.* Demand due time!  
Appius!—Assign the cause, why you denied  
A Roman maid, of free condition,  
Her liberty provisionally, while  
Her plea remain'd unjudg'd. No answer, Appius  
Lictors, lay hold upon him—to prison with him!  
Look to him well. To prison with the tyrant!

[*Exeunt Appius and Lictors, R. Icilius and Numitorius* 1

*Vibul.* Let all his friends, that their own safety prize,  
Solicit straight for his enlargement; doff



Their marks of station, and to the vulgar eye  
 Disguise it with the garb of mourning ; 'twill  
 Conciliate the crowd.—We know them well :  
 But humour them, they are water soon as fire !  
[*Exeunt severally.*]

SCENE II.—*Virginus's House.*

*Enter* LUCIUS and SERVIA, L.

*Luc.* (c.) Is he not yet come home ?

*Servia.* (c.) Not since her death.

I dread his coming home, good Lucius.

*Luc.* (L.) A step ! 'Tis Numitorius and Virginus.

*Servia.* Gods ! how he looks !—See, Lucius, how he looks !

*Enter* VIRGINIUS, attended by NUMITORIUS and others, L.

*Vir.* (c.) 'Tis ease ! 'Tis ease ! I am content ! 'Tis peace,  
 'Tis any thing that is most soft and quiet.  
 And after such a dream !—I want my daughter ;  
 Send me my daughter !

*Num.* Yes, his reason's gone.  
 Scarce had he come in sight of his once sweet  
 And happy home, ere with a cry he fell  
 As one struck dead.—When to himself he came,  
 We found him as you see. How is it, brother ?

*Vir.* How should it be but well ? Our cause is good.  
 Think you Rome will stand by, and see a man  
 Robb'd of his child ? We are bad enough, but yet  
 They should not so mistake us. “ We are slaves,  
 But not yet monsters.”—Call my daughter to me.  
 What keeps her thus ? I never stept within  
 The threshold yet, without her meeting me  
 With a kiss. She's very long coming. Call her

*Num.* Icilius comes ! See, my Icilius, see !

*Enter* ICILIUS, L.

*Vir.* Come, come, make ready. Brother, you and he  
 Go on before : I'll bring her after you.

*Icil.* Ha !

*Num.* My Icilius, what a sight is there !  
 Virginus' reason is a wreck, so stripp'd  
 And broken by wave and wind, you scarce  
 Would know it was the gallant bark you saw  
 Riding so late in safety !



*Icil.* [*Taking Virginius's hand.*] Father! Father!  
That art no more a father!

*Vir.* Ha! what wet  
Is this upon my hand? a tear, boy! Fie,  
For shame! Is that the weapon you would guard  
Your bride with? First assay what steel can do!

*Num.* Not a tear has bless'd his eye since her death!  
No wonder.

The fever of his brain, that now burns out,  
Has drunk the source of sorrow's torrents dry.

*Icil.* You would not have it otherwise? 'Twas fit  
The bolt, that struck the sole remaining branch,  
And blasted it, should set the trunk on fire!

*Num.* If we could make him weep—

*Icil.* (L.) I have that will make him,  
If aught will do it. 'Tis her urn. 'Twas that  
Which first drew tears from me. I'll fetch it. But  
I cannot think you wise, to wake a man  
Who's at the mercy of a tempest. Better  
You suffer him to sleep it through. [*Exit Icilius, L.*]

*Vir.* Gather your friends together: tell them of  
Dentatus' murder. Screw the chord of rage  
To the topmost pitch. Mine own is not mine own  
[*Laughs.*]

That's strange enough. Why does he not dispute  
My right to my own flesh, and tell my heart  
Its blood is not its own? He might as well. [*Laughs*]  
But I want my child.

*Enter LUCIUS, L.*

*Luc.* Justice will be defeated!

*Vir.* (C.) Who says that?  
He lies in the face of the gods! She is immutable,  
Immaculate, and immortal! And though all  
The guilty globe should blaze, she will spring up  
Through the fire, and soar above the crackling pile,  
With not a downy feather ruffled by  
Its fierceness!

*Num.* (L. C.) He is not himself! What new  
Oppression comes to tell us to our teeth,  
We only mock'd ourselves to think the days  
Of thralldom past?

*Luc.* The friends of Appius  
Beset the people with solicitations.  
The fickle crowd, that change with every change,

Begin to doubt and soften. Every moment  
That's lost, a friend is lost. Appear among  
Your friends, or lose them !

*Num.* Lucius, you  
Remain and watch Virginius.

*[Exit, followed by all but Lucius and Servia.]*

*Vir.* You remember,  
Don't you, nurse !

*Servia.* What, Virginius ?

*Vir.* That she nurs'd  
The child herself. " Inquire among your gossips,  
Which of them saw it ; and, with such of them  
As can avouch the fact, without delay  
Repair to the Forum." Will she come or not ?  
I'll call myself :—She will not dare !—O when  
Did my Virginia dare—Virginia !  
Is it a voice, or nothing answers me ?  
I hear a sound so fine—there's nothing lives  
'Twixt it and silence. " Such a slender one  
I've heard when I have talk'd with her in fancy !  
A phantom sound !" Aha ! She is not here !  
'They told me she was here : they have deceiv'd me ;  
And Appius was not made to give her up,  
But keeps her, and effects his wicked purpose  
While I stand talking here, and ask you if  
My daughter is my daughter ! Though a legion  
Sentry'd that brothel, which he calls his palace,  
I'd tear her from him !

*Luc.* Hold, Virginius ! Stay :  
Appius is now in prison.

*Vir.* With my daughter !  
He has secur'd her there ! Ha ! has he so ?  
Gay office for a dungeon ! Hold me not,  
Or I will dash you down, and spoil you for  
My keeper. My Virginia, struggle with him !  
Appal him with thy shrieks ; ne'er faint, ne'er faint !  
I am coming to thee ! I am coming to thee !

*[Virginius rushes out, L. followed by Lucius  
Servia, and others.]*

### SCENE III.—A Dungeon

*APPIUS discovered.*

*Appi.* From the palace to the dungeon is a road  
'Trod oft, not oft retrud. What hope have I  
To pace it back again ? I know of none.

I am as one that's dead ! " The dungeon, that  
 Encloses fallen greatness, may as well  
 Be called its tomb." I am as much the carcass  
 Of myself, as if the string were taken from  
 My neck. Their hands long for the office. O,  
 'Tis worth the half of a plebeian's life,  
 To get his greasy fingers on the throat  
 Of a patrician ! But I'll baulk them. Come !  
 Appius shall have an executioner  
 No less illustrious than himself.

[*He is on the point of swallowing poison, when  
 Vibulanus enters, R.*]

Who's there ?

*Vibul.* Your friend !

*App.* My Vibulanus !

*Vibul.* Appius, what

Was that you hid in such confusion, as  
 I enter'd ?

*App.* 'Tis a draught for life, which, swallow'd,  
 She relishes so richly, that she cares not  
 If she ne'er drink again ! Here's health to you !

*Vibul.* Not out of such a cup as that, my Appius.  
 " Despair, that bids you drink it, as the cure  
 Of canker'd life, but lies to you, and turns  
 Your eyes from hope, that even now stands ready  
 With outstretch'd arms to rush to your embrace."  
 Your friends are busy for you with your foes—  
 Your foes become your friends. Where'er a frown  
 Appears against you, nothing 's spar'd to make  
 The wearer doff it, and put up a smile  
 In its stead. " Your colleague Oppius is in prison.  
 Your client too. Their harm 's your safety : it  
 Distracts the appetite o' the dogs. They drop  
 The morsel they took up before, as soon  
 As a new one's thrown to them."

*App.* Thou giv'st me life  
 Indeed !

*Vibul.* That I may give thee life indeed,  
 I'll waste no longer time with thee ; " for that  
 Already taken to assure thee of  
 Thy fast reviving fortunes, cheats them of  
 The aid should help to re-establish them."  
 Farewell, my Appius ! If my absence takes  
 A friend from thee, it leaves one with thee—Hope !

[*Exit, R.*]

*App.* And I will clasp it to me ! Never friend  
 Made sweeter promises. But snatch me from  
 Beneath the feet of the vile herd, that's now  
 Broke loose and roams at large, I'll show them who  
 They'd trample on. " Hope ! Hope ! They say of thee,  
 Thou art a friend that promises, but cares not  
 To keep his word. ' This once keep thine with Appius,  
 And he will give thee out so true a tongue,  
 Thy word is bond enough !"—At liberty !  
 Again at liberty ! O give me power  
 As well, for every minute of my thralldom  
 I'll pick a victim from the common herd  
 Shall groan his life in bondage. " Liberty !  
 'Tis triumph, power, dominion, every thing !"  
 Are ye not open yet, ye servile gates ?  
 Let fall your chains, and push your bolts aside !  
 It is your past and future lord commands you !

*Vir.* [*Rushing in, R.*] Give me my daughter !

*App.* Ha !

*Vir.* My child ! my daughter !

My daughter ! my Virginia ! Give her me !

*App.* Thy daughter !

*Vir.* Ay ! Deny that she is mine  
 And I will strangle thee, unless the lie  
 Should choke thee first.

*App.* Thy daughter !

*Vir.* Play not with me !

Provoke me not ! Equivocate, and lo !  
 Thou sport'st with fire. I am wild, distracted, mad !  
 I am all a flame—a flame ! I tell thee, once  
 For all, I want my child, and I will have her ;  
 So give her to me.

*App.* Cag'd with a madman ! Hoa !  
 Without there !

*Vir.* Not a step thou stirr'st from hence,  
 Till I have found my child. " Attempt that noise  
 Again, and I will stop the vent, that not  
 A squeak shall pass it. There are plugs for you  
 Will keep it air-tight [*Showing his fingers.*] " Please you,  
 give me back  
 My daughter.

*App.* In truth she is not here, Virginius ;  
 Or I would give her to thee.

*Vir.* Would ? Ay, should !  
 Tho' would were would not. Do you say, indeed,



She is not here ? You nothing know of her

*App.* Nothing, Virginius ! good Virginius, nothing.

*Vir.* How if I thrust my hand into your breast,  
And tore your heart out, and confronted it  
With your tongue ? I'd like it. Shall we try it ? Fool !  
Are not the ruffians leagued ? The one would swear  
To the tale o' the other.

*App.* By the gods, Virginius,  
Your daughter is not in my keeping

*Vir.* Well,  
Then I must seek her elsewhere. I did dream  
That I had murder'd her—"Tis false ! 'twas but  
A dream—She isn't here, you say—Well ! well !  
Then I must go and seek her elsewhere—Yet  
She's not at home—and where else should I seek her  
But there or here ? Here ! here ! here ! Yes, I say,  
But there or here—I tell you I must find her—  
She must be here, or what do you here ? What  
But such a wonder of rich beauty could  
Deck out a dungeon so as to despoil  
A palace of its tenant ? Art thou not  
The tyrant Appius ? Did'st thou not decree  
My daughter to be Claudius' slave, who gave her  
To his master ? Have you not secur'd her here  
To compass her dishonour, ere her father  
Arrives to claim her ?

*App.* No.

*Vir.* Do you tell me so ?  
Vile tyrant ! Think you, shall I not believe  
My own eyes before your tongue ? Why, there she is !  
'There at your back—her locks dishevell'd and  
Her vestiment torn ! Her cheeks all faded with  
Her pouring tears, " as flowers with too much rain !"  
Her form no longer kept and treasur'd up  
" By her maiden-pride, like a rich casket, cast  
Aside, neglected and forgot, because  
The richer gem was shrin'd in it is lost !"  
Villain ! is this a sight to shew a father ?  
And have I not a weapon to requite thee ?

*[Searches about his clothes.]*

Ha ! here are ten !

*App.* Keep down your hands ? Help ! help

*Vir.* No other look but that ! Look on ! look on !  
It turns my very flesh to steel—Brave girl !



Keep thine eye fix'd—let it not wink—Look on!

[*Exeunt, struggling, L.*]

*Enter (R.) NUMITORIUS, ICILIUS LUCIUS, Guard and Soldier.*

*Num.* Not here!

*Luc.* Is this the dungeon? Appius is not here,  
Ner yet Virginius. You have sure mistaken.

*Guard.* This is the dungeon—Here Virginius entered.

*Num.* Yet is not here! Hush! The abode of death  
Is just as silent. Gods! should the tyrant take  
The father's life, in satisfaction for  
The deed that robb'd him of the daughter's charms—  
Hush! hark! A groan! There's something stirs.

*Luc.* 'Tis this way!

*Num.* Come on! Protect him, gods, or pardon me  
If with my own hand I revenge his death. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV.—*Another Dungeon.—Virginus discovered on one knee, with Appius lying dead before him.*

*Enter NUMITORIUS, ICILIUS, with the Urn of VIRGINIA, and LUCIUS.*

*Num.* What's here? Virginius! with the tyrant prostrate and dead!

*Luc.* His senses are benumb'd; there is no audit to his mind, by which our words can reach it. Help to raise him: the motion may recal perception.

*Num.* His eye is not so deathlike fix'd: it moves a little.

*Luc.* Speak to him, Numitorius: he knows your voice the best.

*Num.* Virginius!

*Luc.* I think he hears you; speak again.

*Num.* Virginius!

*Vir.* Ah! [*Virginus rises and comes forward, supported by Numitorius and Lucius.*]

*Luc.* That sigh has burst the spell which held him.

*Num.* Virginius! my dear brother!

*Vir.* Lighter! lighter! My heart is ten times lighter!  
What a load it has heav'd off! Where is he? I thought I had done it.

*Num.* Virginius!

*Vir.* Well, who are you? What do you want? I'll answer what I've done.

*Num.* Do you know me, brother? Speak, *Icilius*; try if he knows you.

*Icil.* (R.) *Virginus*!

*Num.* Try again.

*Icil.* *Virginus*!

*Vir.* [*Sinking.*] That voice—that voice—I know that voice!

It minds me of a voice was coupled with it,

And made such music, once to hear it was

Enough to make it ever after be

Remember'd! [*Icilius places the Urn in his right hand*

What's this?

*Icil.* *Virginia*!

THE END.

#### DISPOSITION OF THE CHARACTERS AT THE FALL OF THE CURTAIN.

*Virginus* looks alternately at *Icilius* and the *Urn*—looks at *Numitorius* and *Lucius*—seems particularly struck by his mourning—looks at the *Urn* again—bursts into a passion of tears, and exclaims, “*Virginia*!”—Falls on *Icilius*'s neck. *Curtain drops.*

R.]

[L.]

## PROLOGUE,

*Written by J. H. Reynolds, Esq. and spoken by Miss Booth.*

[*Speaking behind.*] NAY, Mr. Fawcett, give me leave, I pray :

The audience wait, and I must have my way. [*Enters.*  
What ! curb a woman's tongue !—As I'm alive,  
The wretch would mar our old prerogative !  
Ladies ! by very dint of pertinacity,  
Have I preserv'd the glory of loquacity.

Oh ! could you gaze, as I am gazing now,  
And see each man behind, with gather'd brow  
And clenched hand (tho' nought my spirit damps)  
Beckoning, with threats, my presence from the lamps :  
Each, as I broke my way, declared how well  
His art could woo you—to be peaceable !  
One is well robed—a second greatly shines  
In the nice balance of *cast-iron* lines ;  
A third can sing—a fourth can touch your tears—  
A fifth—" I'll see no more !"—a fifth appears,  
Who had been once in Italy, and seen Rome ;  
In short—there's quite a hubbub in the Green-Room  
But I—a very woman—careless—light—  
Fleet idly to your presence, this fair night ;  
And, craving your sweet pardon, fain would say  
A kind word for the poet and his play.

To-night, no idle nondescript lays waste  
The fairy and yet placid bower of taste :  
No story, piled with dark and cumbrous fate,  
And words that stagger under their own weight,  
But one of silent grandeur—simply said,  
As tho' it were awaken'd from the dead !  
It is a tale—made beautiful by years ;—  
Of pure, old, Roman sorrow—old in tears !  
And those, you shed o'er it in childhood, may  
Still fall—and fall—for sweet Virginia !

Nor doth a crowned poet of the age  
Call the sweet spirits from the historic page !  
No old familiar dramatist hath spun  
This tragic, antique web, to-night—but one,  
An unknown author, in a sister land,  
Waits, in young fear, the fiat of your hand.

## EPILOGUE,

*Written by Barry Cornwall, Esq. and spoken by Miss Brunton.*

LEAVING the common path, which many tread,  
We will not wake with jokes our poet's dead ;  
Nor shame the young creations of his pen,  
By bidding all, who've perish'd, be again.  
The pale Virginia, in her bloody shroud,  
Lies like a shrined saint.—Oh ! then, aloud  
Shall we break scurril jests, and bid depart  
Those thoughts of her, which fill and teach the heart ?  
No moral now we offer, squar'd in form,  
But Pity, like the sun-light, bright and warm,  
Comes mix'd with showers ; and, fading, leaves behind  
A beauty and a blossom on the mind.  
We do not strain to show that “ thus it grows,”  
And “ hence we learn” what every body knows :  
But casting idle dogmas (words) aside,  
We paint a villain in his purple pride ;  
And tearing down a pow'r, that grew too bold,  
Show merely what was done in days of old.  
Leaving this image on the soul, we go  
Unto our gentler story, touch'd with woe,  
(With woe that wantons not, nor wears away  
The heart) and love too perfect for decay.  
But whatsoe'er we do, we will not shame  
Your better feeling, with an idle game  
Of grin and mimicry (a loathsome task !)  
Or strip the great Muse of her mighty mask,  
And hoot her from her throne of tears and sighs,  
Until, from folly and base jest, she dies.  
No : let her life be long, her reign supreme—  
If but a dream, it is a glorious dream.

Dwell then upon our tale ; and bear along  
With you, deep thoughts—of love—of bitter wrong  
Of freedom — of sad pity—and lust of power.  
The tale is fitted for an after hour.





